30. TNA WO 55/1939, fols 47, 50–1.
31. BRO B. 1/1 (Guild Minute Book), fols 11d, 14d, 16d, 18, 34.
32. TNA PRO SP 15/5, no. 31.
33. TNA SP 15/3, no. 18.
34. R. Tittler, *The Reformation and the Towns in England: Politics and Political Culture, c. 1540–1640* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), pp. 255ff.
35. S.M. Jack, *Towns in Tudor and Stuart Britain* (New York: St Martins Press, 1996), p. 70.
36. BRO B. 1/2, fol. 41.
37. BRO B. 1/2, fol. 69d.
38. BRO B. 1/2, fol. 74.
39. BRO B. 1/6, fols 23d–24d, 39.
40. BRO B. 1/3, fols 67d, 73–5.
41. TNA WO 55/1939, fols 21d–22.
42. TNA WO 55/1939, fols 23–6.
43. TNA SP 59/22, fols 223d–224.
44. TNA SP 59/22, fols 243–246d.
45. BRO B. 1/3, fol. 77.
46. From a letter in the Hasting manuscripts at the Huntingdon Library, printed in full in M.C. Cross, 'Berwick on Tweed and the Neighbouring Parts of Northumberland on the eve of the Armada', *Archaeologia Aeliana*, 4th series, xii (1963), pp. 123–34.
47. TNA WO 55/1939, fols 47, 50–1.
48. TNA WO 55/1939, fols 52–53d.
49. TNA WO 55/1939, fol. 81.
50. TNA WO 55/1939, fols 84d–87.
51. TNA WO 55/1939, fol. 88d.
52. TNA SP 59/29, fols 11–21.
53. TNA SP 59/29, fol. 12.
54. TNA SP 59/29, fol. 113.
55. *Wills and Inventories from the Registry at Durham*, ed. G. Williams, pt. 2, Surtees Society, vol. 38 (London: J.B. Nichols and Son, 1860), pp. 225–6.
56. If also somewhat exaggerated: A. Shepard, '"Contesting Communities"? "Town" and "Gown" in Cambridge, c. 1560–1640', in *Communities in Early Modern England*, pp. 216–34.
57. Sahlins, *Boundaries*, p. 165.
58. Newton, *North-East England*, pp. 7–8.
59. On the significance of 1603 for north-eastern identity and development more generally, see Newton, *North-East England*, ch. 4.
60. See *The True Narration of the Entertainment of his Royall Maiestie, from the time of his departure from Edenbrough till his receiving at London* (London, 1603), sig. C1v.
61. TNA SP 14/5, nos 5, 11; SP 14/6, no. 5; SP 14/8, no. 15.
62. Quoted in J. Fuller, *History of Berwick-upon-Tweed* (Edinburgh: Bell and Bradfute, 1799), pp. 153–4.

5

The Alehousekeeper's Revenge: London's Role in the Reformation Process in a Lancashire Parish

Joseph P. Ward

In 1621, Isabel Berely, an alehousekeeper, donated £30 towards the construction and maintenance of a free school for the children of Kirkham, Lancashire. There had been a school in Kirkham from at least the mid-sixteenth century, but it was poorly endowed. Effective control over the school and all other ecclesiastical and civil affairs of Kirkham rested in the hands of its self-perpetuating, 30-man council. Apparently inspired by Berely's generosity, the council undertook a voluntary collection throughout the parish to support the school, raising over £170. When it came time to choose a schoolmaster, the council followed Berely's advice and hired Thomas Armesteed, who taught until 1628. At that point, several of the wealthier parishioners, including Sir Cuthbert Clifton, the leading local gentleman, proposed that they should appoint the next schoolmaster because they had contributed the greatest part of the school fund. Their nominee was a 'Mr. Sokell' who, like themselves, was Catholic. Berely and several other parishioners opposed this move and asked Bishop John Bridgeman of Chester to intervene on their behalf. Bridgeman called for the election of between six and nine school trustees from the parish, with the stipulation that one of these trustees would have to be John Wilding, who had married the former Isabel Berely following the death of her first husband. In the event, Sokell became the schoolmaster and served until the early 1630s.[1]

In 1634, it appeared that a compromise had been reached between Clifton and Edward Fleetwood, Kirkham's godly vicar, to install Thomas Robinson in the vacant schoolmaster's post, but several trustees succeeded in electing Hugh Whaley instead. Fleetwood, convinced that Whaley was a Catholic, barred him from entering the schoolhouse, relenting only after he had failed to convince Bishop Bridgeman to intercede.[2] In the meantime, Isabel Wilding approached the Kirkham

councillors and offered to donate a further £30 to the school if they would agree to certain conditions. They dismissed her offer and so she instead bequeathed that amount to the benefit of the poor in the parish.[3]

Twenty years later, Henry Colbron took up Isabel Berely's cause. Colbron was born in Kirkham in 1598 and made his fortune as a scrivener in London. In the will that he composed in August 1655, he instructed his trustees to lease the Kirkham rectory lands from Christ Church, Oxford. The trustees were to use any profits from the lease to acquire other properties, which in turn would provide an endowment to 'maintain schools and poor people'. At the end of 16 years, the trustees were to give the lands to the Drapers' Company with the understanding that the company would manage the charities. Colbron's will did not specify where these charities should be located. After Kirkham's council learned of Colbron's death in April 1656, it sent a delegation to London to consult with his trustees. Further meetings during the next several years convinced the men of Kirkham that, despite the vagueness of Colbron's will, the charitable institutions would be located in their township.[4]

The London drapers had a different opinion. The parish of Kirkham encompassed more than a dozen townships, several of which were separated from the main body of the parish either by portions of other parishes or, in one case, by the River Wyre (Figure 5.1). Other townships in the parish had their own councils of sworn men to oversee local affairs, though it appears that Kirkham's council made some decisions for the parish as a whole. The governors of one of these townships, Goosnargh, wrote to the drapers, claiming that they were inhabitants of the parish of Kirkham who lived too far from the township of Kirkham for their children to attend a school located there.[5] The drapers accepted their argument and decided to devote one-third of Colbron's gift to a school in Goosnargh and the rest to a school in Kirkham.[6] In response, the Kirkham council launched a Chancery suit in 1672 seeking to remove oversight of Colbron's charities from the London company. The complaint asserted that Colbron 'declared himself upon his death bed' that he wished his gift to benefit the 'town and parish of Kirkham' which had been the place of his 'nativity and education'. They asked the court to entrust the estate to themselves instead of the drapers, implying clearly that they were best positioned to enact Colbron's wishes.[7] In defence of their role in the charities, the London drapers acknowledged that it was Colbron's intent that his benefactions assist 'the parish of Kirkham' but noted the request that they had received from Goosnargh, which suggested that Kirkham was 'a great parish consisting of about

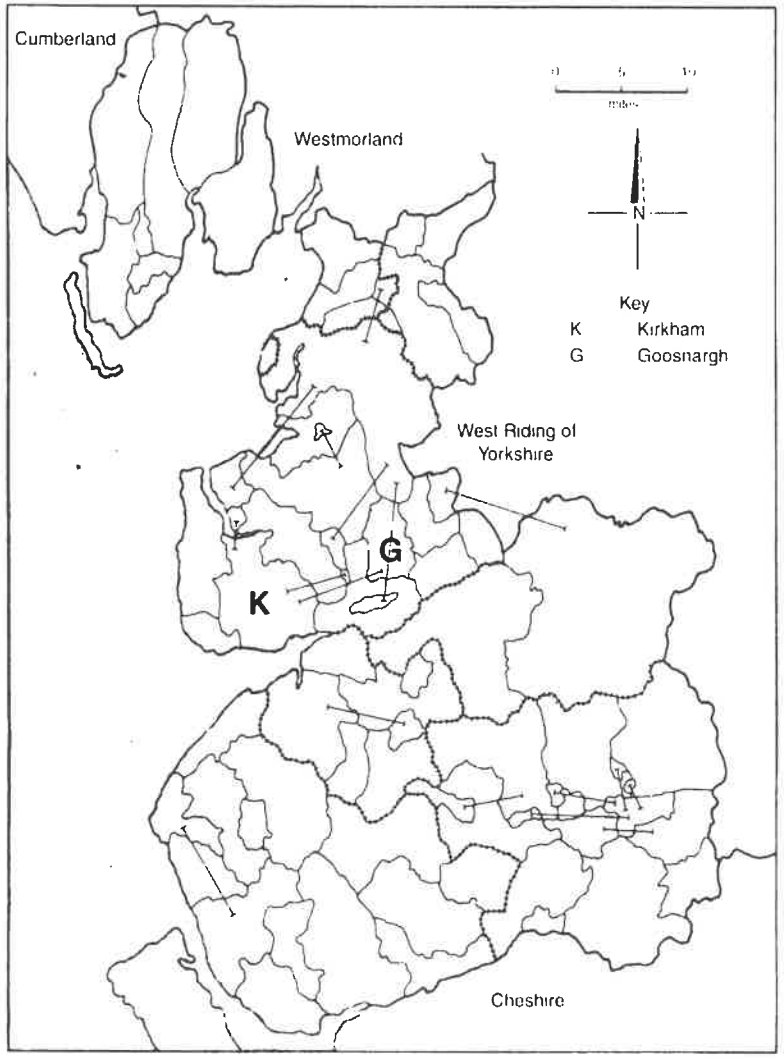


Figure 5.1 Lancashire parish boundaries. Adapted from C. Haigh, *Reformation and Resistance in Tudor Lancashire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975), pp. xii–xiii by Suzanne Farmer.

twenty townships many of them being poor and destitute of ministers and schools'.[8]

The Chancery case is of particular interest in the context of this book because it explored the limits of parochial identity in Kirkham. A parish

was a unit of territory given religious meaning through customs and practices established over many centuries. In sprawling parishes such as Kirkham, in which geography encouraged many parishioners to resort to chapels of ease, the vicar had to work diligently to overcome religious entropy. The church in Kirkham may never have exerted a strong influence over all of the people in its territory, but what little influence it may have had was shattered by the Civil Wars and Interregnum. The Chancery suit focused on Goosnargh's relationship to Kirkham. The depositions gathered from witnesses in Lancashire and London ranged over a wide array of practices, from both contemporary and earlier periods, revealing the overlapping and sometimes contradictory definitions of a parish in Restoration England. The opinions on the matter were, in the words of one deponent, 'very various', with 'some affirming the said townships to lye within Kirkham parish and others the contrary'.[9]

The Restoration-era lawsuit also reflected the incompleteness of the Reformation process in Kirkham. Christopher Haigh's study of religion in Tudor Lancashire revealed the divisions within the county by the end of Elizabeth's reign, with some areas mainly holding firm to traditional Catholicism while others were showing indications of puritanism.[10] The established Church of England was, at best, tenuously rooted in Lancashire by the end of the sixteenth century, making the county a leading candidate for godly reform efforts to bring theological light into the 'dark corners of the land'.[11] For that reason, the repercussions of religious change during the sixteenth century were felt well into, and possibly beyond, the seventeenth century. Nicholas Tyacke has suggested that in the early years of Elizabeth's reign England was 'only at the start of the Reformation process, with probably a large majority of the population remaining to be won'. Reformers argued among themselves over how best to pursue that national conversion to a new faith, and the 'ensuing split, from the later sixteenth century onwards, between puritans and their conformist opponents was more a dispute over means than ends, the working of a saving faith within the individual as opposed to the collective immersion of the parish in reformed religious beliefs and practices'.[12] Similarly, in his study of religion in the Vale of Gloucester from the end of Elizabeth's reign to the late seventeenth century, Dan Beaver followed the example of scholars who in their concern for 'the reformation process... pursued the influence and variations of doctrinal controversy into town and village in order to explore the impact of religious conflict on social and political boundaries, on the differentiation of elite and popular forms of religion, and on the process of social control implicit in the dominance of the former'.[13] This analytical framework guides researchers who situate their work in the Post-Reformation era and, as John Spurr has put it, 'write of the blending of new and old, of a process of dialectic and a synthesis'.[14]

This chapter examines the Reformation process in Kirkham until the end of the seventeenth century, and the complexities of establishing a cohesive local identity in a confessionally and socially divided community. It will focus on the local politics of religion, as some parishioners sought to wrest influence over religious and educational institutions from the hands of gentry who seemed content to manage affairs in a traditional manner. The innovators looked to the London godly for support, and their efforts bore fruit only towards the end of the century. By that time, however, the parish had splintered along confessional and geographical lines, which significantly limited the potential for endowed charities governed by Londoners to restructure the belief system in the parish.

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The parish of Kirkham lay on the Irish Sea coast in west-central Lancashire.[15] During the 1530s, Henry VIII seized the manorial estate containing the parish of Kirkham during his dissolution of the monasteries and used that property as part of the endowment for Christ Church, Oxford, which he had rededicated. From that point onwards, the College, and at times its tenants, received the tithes and other revenues from the parish and nominated clergymen to the bishops of Chester to serve as Kirkham's vicars.[16]

Kirkham remained a Catholic stronghold throughout the sixteenth century. The parishioners repaired the church's rood loft in 1547 and the bells were rung at the chapel in Goosnargh on All Saints' Day in 1578, both of which suggest that the traditional faith continued to be practised publicly. Those anecdotes are buttressed by the continuation of the dominant local gentry family, the Cliftons, as leading recusants in Elizabethan Lancashire. Haigh suggests that there is evidence that Kirkham contained large numbers of recusants in the 1570s because of long-standing ties to the old faith and not, as some historians would have assumed, because of any missionary efforts by Catholic seminarians who had recently arrived in England. It seems likely that the local elite, led by the Cliftons, turned a blind eye towards recusancy, allowing it to flourish. In 1590, 16 couples had their children secretly baptized by Catholic priests at Kirkham, whose vicar James Smith was reportedly

a harbourer of recusants. Catholic baptisms were also performed in Kirkham in 1605. Indeed, Kirkham was among the parishes with the highest concentrations of recusants in Lancashire.[17]

Vicars of Kirkham who were not sympathetic to the traditional faith clashed with their parishioners. Nicholas Helme, who held the office from 1594 to 1598, caused controversy by preaching against traditional baptismal practices and, in the eyes of some, failing to administer the Eucharist with due reverence. Dissatisfaction with Helme's approach may have led some of the conservative parishioners to report to the bishop that he had kept another man's wife in his house for a year.[18] Helme's brief tenure would appear peaceful when compared to that of Edward Fleetwood, vicar from 1629 to 1650. Fleetwood was an energetic puritan who did not follow the ceremonial guidelines of the Prayer Book and often demonstrated little patience with the local recusant establishment.[19] The absence of unity within the parish during Fleetwood's tenure was apparent in the arguments about the local school in 1634 that were discussed above.

Divisions within Kirkham deepened during the following years. Fleetwood asserted his right to veto the proceedings of the council in 1636 and locked its members out of the church after they had refused to comply with his orders. The parishioners complained to Bishop Bridgeman, who tried unsuccessfully to mediate the dispute, so they next turned to Archbishop Richard Neile of York. Neile referred the matter back to Bridgeman with the suggestion that if the bishop could not resolve the matter, then it would need to be brought before the Court of High Commission. Bridgeman expressed concern that the council was exercising greater authority than allowed by law, and so he called for a vote among parishioners on its powers. The parishioners subsequently endorsed the council, but Fleetwood refused to acknowledge this result, and so the matter was sent back to Neile, who prepared a case for High Commission but failed to submit it. The parishioners also sued Fleetwood in the consistory court in Chester, which ordered Fleetwood to pay all of the parishioners' legal costs in the case. In what must have been a reflection of the strained relations between vicar and parishioners, the parish clerk inserted the rather hopeful comment 'How good and joyful a thynge it is for Bretheren to dwell together in Unitie' at the start of his record for 1638.[20] Having seen his efforts to reduce the influence of Kirkham's Catholics repulsed on more than one occasion, Vicar Fleetwood moved to London in 1641 and left his son-in-law John Fisher to oversee the parish. Fleetwood took the parish record books with him

when he left, returning them only in 1651, by which time Fisher had been established as vicar.[21]

The Civil Wars and Interregnum restructured authority in Kirkham. The parish felt the full effects of the new political and theological order emanating from Westminster. Leading gentry families, including the Cliftons, were implicated in the royalist cause. As Parliament seized their estates, their local influence waned, creating leadership opportunities for others. In 1645, the Kirkham council appointed new trustees for the school, 'most of the old ones being on the kings side as Mr. Clifton... and others having fled'. The ascendancy of Parliament altered the religious establishment in the parish. Not surprisingly, those ministers who would remain publicly active during the Civil Wars and Interregnum were supporters of the parliamentary cause. From 1645, the ministers officiating at Kirkham's church and the parish's five chapels received stipends drawn from the sequestered estates of royalists Thomas Clifton – heir of Sir Cuthbert Clifton – and Sir Thomas Tildsley, who together had previously impropriated the parochial tithes.[22] In October 1646, Parliament approved a Presbyterian structure for Lancashire, with Kirkham grouped with three neighbouring parishes into the county's seventh classis. Clergymen with local ties also took part in the political culture of the time. Vicar Fleetwood, along with William Ingham, minister at Goosnargh, signed the Harmonious Consent of the Lancashire clergy in 1648, which defended presbyterianism and condemned those who were at that time promoting toleration for sectaries. Fleetwood also signed the Agreement of the People of 1649, suggesting that he endorsed Leveller-inspired republicanism.[23]

The church survey of 1650 indicated the important role that Kirkham's chapels played in the sprawling parish. More than 200 families worshipped at Lund Chapel, 4 miles from Kirkham, and 140 families attended Singleton Chapel, 7 miles from Kirkham. Neither of these chapels had been able to support a minister before Parliament's redistribution of the previously impropriated tithes. Goosnargh's chapel, which was 12 miles from the parish church, served a 'verie populous' group of inhabitants. The church survey recorded the desire of the inhabitants of each of these villages to separate themselves from the parish of Kirkham by having their chapel recognized as a parish church on its own.[24] The residents of Goosnargh may have believed that Parliament had granted their request. At first, the Committee on Plundered Ministers assumed that Goosnargh was a parish, but it subsequently reaffirmed that it was instead a parochial chapel attached to the parish of Kirkham. In 1651, the Kirkham council noted that the residents of Goosnargh had stopped

paying their annual 10s. contribution 'towards the repair of the Mother Church', and so they began legal action. That suit was dismissed 3 years later, suggesting that the powers in place at that time accepted the independence of Goosnargh from Kirkham.[25]

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Like many communities across England, Kirkham had to rebuild itself after the Restoration of the Stuart monarchy in 1660. The names of prominent pre-Civil War parishioners reappeared in the records of the local council. Foremost among these was Sir Thomas Clifton, who took a leading role in efforts to keep Kirkham's school's finances afloat.[26] Clifton may have regained his prominent place in the community, but significant divisions within the parish continued. The Episcopal Returns of 1669 indicated the presence of three different theological groupings in Kirkham: Catholics, who had five different meeting places, including one to which 'visibly and ordinarily resort some hundreds'; Quakers, with one regular meeting; and 'Phanaticks', with conventicles held in four parts of the parish including Kirkham itself and Goosnargh, which was listed as 'a Chappelry in this parish'. This survey suggests that there was an unusually high level of religious diversity in Restoration Kirkham when compared with other parishes in the region.[27]

The 1672 Chancery suit over control of Colbron's benefaction provided an opportunity for the people of Kirkham and its surrounding townships to reflect upon their relationships with one another. Several witnesses testified to the place of parish officials in local government. A parish was a legal body, and so its officers played a role in a variety of governmental activities, such as the distribution of poor relief and the collection of taxes. One clerk for a justice of the peace reported that in 1656 or 1657 he had sent correspondence 'to the churchwardens and overseers of the poor of the parish of Goosnargh', while the clerk for another justice stated that since he began working in the area in 1653 overseers of the poor were 'nominated and appointed for the parish of Goosnargh' every year within 1 month after Easter.[28] Additional depositions maintained that Kirkham and Goosnargh were listed as separate parishes in the book of rates for Parliamentary subsidies.[29] Such testimony bolstered the argument that Goosnargh was not part of the parish of Kirkham, although other depositions weakened that case by pointing out that the assessments for the collection of moneys to support maimed Royalist soldiers during the prior decade listed Goosnargh as a chapelry within the parish of Kirkham. In other words, these witnesses supported

the idea that there was a chapel in Goosnargh for the convenience of those who could not travel to the parish church in Kirkham but that the chapel was subordinate to, rather than independent of, the vicar of Kirkham.[30]

Kirkham vicars had travelled to Goosnargh periodically during the middle decades of the century. Several witnesses addressed the ways in which the distance between parish church and chapel had been bridged. During the 1650s, Ellen Ratis sold ale from her home, which was located on the road connecting the townships of Kirkham and Goosnargh. Vicar John Fisher stopped for ale there on at least three occasions when travelling from Kirkham to Goosnargh. During one of those stops, Fisher told Ratis that he had a duty to preach at Goosnargh once or twice a year and that he received 10s. annually for that service.[31] Other deponents mentioned that Goosnargh paid 10s. annually to the Kirkham churchwardens, presumably to subsidize the vicar's travels to the chapel, as Ratis suggested.[32]

The customary practices surrounding burials further supported the notion that, at least in the early seventeenth century, Goosnargh was closely linked to Kirkham. Henry Duddell, a husbandman of Salwick, a village about two-thirds of the way from Goosnargh to Kirkham, testified that he lived in what was commonly called 'the Wake House'. His house was so named because 'several ancient people' had told him that those who were transporting a corpse from Goosnargh to Kirkham for burial would spend the night there, the journey being too great to accomplish in 1 day.[33] Richard Duddell, also a husbandman of Salwick and presumably a kinsman of Henry, made a similar report. He said that 60 years earlier – when he would have been about 10 years old – his father Richard Duddell had been Sir Cuthbert Hallsall's tenant. One evening, Hallsall came to the Duddells' house with a corpse that he and several companions were taking from Goosnargh to Kirkham, and he asked permission to spend the night with them 'according to ancient custom'. The elder Richard Duddell complied, welcoming his unexpected guests into his home and allowing them to cut turf from his fields so they could build fires. Richard Duddell also noted that a similar episode took place 9 years later.[34] There was no direct evidence that burial parties stayed at Wake House after the early decades of the century. Richard Duddell offered recollections of two incidents that took place during the reign of James I, while Henry Duddell testified only to the fact that his house was called 'Wake House' and not to any evidence that it had been used as such recently. Two other witnesses reported that they had heard stories about Wake House but offered no indication that it was

still used by people in Goosnargh bringing their dead to Kirkham for burial.[35]

Other witnesses suggested that Goosnargh had become an independent sacramental community. William Ingham, who preached at Goosnargh during the 1640s and 1650s, testified that the village had been 'reputed and esteemed a parish distinct of itself' and 'had all christenings, burials and other rights belonging to a parish'.[36] John Bullock stated that he had preached at Goosnargh in the late 1660s, during which time 'all christenings and burials' were conducted there.[37] Robert Bamber, a resident of Goosnargh, agreed that in his experience 'there is christenings, buryings, and other rights as in other churches' conducted at Goosnargh, though he insisted that this did not undermine his view that 'he hath not known Goosnargh esteemed a parish but a parochial chapel' attached to the parish of Kirkham.[38]

In addition to undertaking rites of passage in Goosnargh, many local people came during the middle of the seventeenth century to see it as a community of faith and worship separate from that of Kirkham. We have already seen that in the 1650s the vicar of Kirkham felt a duty to preach occasionally at Goosnargh. That seemed to fall away over the ensuing decades. In his deposition for the 1672 Chancery suit, Richard Clegg, who had been the vicar of Kirkham for 6 years, seemed quite uncertain about Goosnargh's place in his parish. He admitted that some of his parishioners in Kirkham had told him that he should preach at Goosnargh four times a year but added that he did not believe that he was required to do so. He acknowledged that he sometimes did preach at Goosnargh, that on one occasion he signed a certificate for a Goosnargh resident that excused him from paying the hearth tax, and that he published a matrimonial bann in Kirkham for a couple that included one person who lived at Goosnargh. Still, according to Clegg, none of that amounted to an acknowledgement that Goosnargh was under his clerical supervision.[39]

Clegg's testimony did not go unchallenged. John Bullock reported that in 1668 he had preached at Goosnargh but that Clegg confronted him about this, claiming that the church at Goosnargh was merely a chapel in the parish of Kirkham and that, as vicar of Kirkham, Clegg had the right to prohibit anyone from preaching there.[40] Furthermore, several witnesses maintained that on a Sunday 2 or 3 years earlier Clegg had attempted to prevent a minister from Yorkshire named Hartley from preaching before what one deponent termed 'a considerable auditory' gathered in his honour. Hartley succeeded in preaching that morning, but Clegg and his parish clerk arrived at midday and attempted to block

him from conducting afternoon services. Ultimately, Clegg relented after Hartley produced a license from the archbishop.[41] The Hartley in question was almost certainly James Hartley, who was described in a petition for a license under the 1672 royal indulgence as 'a Nonconformist minister of the Congregational and Independent persuasion'.[42] In 1674, the Presbyterian Thomas Jolly recorded in his journal that 'One Hartley' was 'an antinomian and much followed by that party everywhere'. Indeed, Hartley was likely a Grindletonian; Grindleton, in the West Riding of Yorkshire, was only 16 miles from Goosnargh.[43] The presence of a crowd expecting to hear Hartley preach may confirm the report in the 1669 Episcopal Returns, discussed above, that there were 'Phanaticks' who met regularly in Goosnargh. With that in mind, it is understandable that Vicar Clegg preferred to think that the poor souls at Goosnargh were someone else's responsibility.

In the end, the Chancery determined that Goosnargh was a part of the parish Kirkham and so it could receive a portion of Henry Colbron's benefaction. This judgment empowered the Drapers' Company to become a significant actor in the parish. The drapers appointed Zachary Taylor as the first preaching schoolmaster in Kirkham under the new scheme. The fact that he had been nominated to the company by the 'parishioners and thirty men' of Kirkham suggests that both sides in the Chancery suit were seeking a middle ground.[44] Taylor was born in 1618, graduated from Dublin University, and served as a chaplain in the royal army during the Civil Wars, but by 1654 he was Presbyterian schoolmaster and curate at Rochdale in Lancashire, from which he was ejected in 1662. He was granted a license to be a preaching schoolmaster in 1672, and Calamy's description of him indicates that he would not be as willing as Kirkham's vicar to abide Catholics.[45]

The old Kirkham elite may have had other reasons to be apprehensive of Colbron's gift. Although he had lived in London for many years, Colbron had business dealings with the Cliftons on more than one occasion. After his father died in 1623, Colbron successfully petitioned for a new lease on his family's tenement, controlled by the Clifton family, that was described as 'a whole oxgang' upon which Colbron's father 'had bestowed 140 shillings on the building, and had marled, and improved the land, which was barren'. By 1627, the rent on the family tenement was being paid by a Richard Colbron, presumably a kinsman.[46] When Henry Colbron composed his will in 1655, Thomas Clifton's estates, including the Kirkham rectory lands he had leased from Christ Church, Oxford, were sequestered because of his support for the king during the Civil Wars. Colbron, a London scrivener who had dealings

with the Committee for Compounding, may well have been aware that Clifton's lease from the college had become available and so, wishing to seize control from Clifton, Colbron instructed his trustees to lease Kirkham's rectory lands.[47] After the Restoration, Thomas Clifton sought legislation to nullify the lease agreement between Colbron's executors and Christ Church, Oxford. King Charles endorsed this move, noting 'the faithful and good services performed by Thomas Clifton Esq. his ancestors and whole family unto our Royal father in the late wars and knowing also the great losses and suffereings which the said Mr Clifton and his family have sustained having their whole estate sold for their loyalty'. In the end, Clifton agreed to pay Colbron's executors £400 per year for the right to hold his family's former tenements.[48]

A rivalry between the Colbron and Clifton families may have begun earlier in the century. Isabel Berely, the alehousekeeper who tried to lead efforts to revitalize Kirkham's school in the 1620s and 1630s, was born Isabel Colbron, and was a cousin of Henry Colbron.[49] According to a history of the school up to the year 1663, which was probably written by one of her allies, during the controversy surrounding the appointment of a schoolmaster in the late 1620s, she had received 'an affront... from Sir Cuthbert Clifton & his Lady.... For Isabell (as often before) repairing... to visit the Lady would not be admitted to see her, neyther what she had to present her with would be taken, but she & it returned home with disgrace'.[50] This suggests that the contest for control over the school caused a breach in what had previously been cordial relations between Berely and the Cliftons. Given that the question at that time was whether or not the Cliftons would succeed in appointing a Catholic to be schoolmaster, it is quite possible that Berely and the Cliftons were on different sides of the religious divide in the parish.

There is much stronger evidence of the religious and political views of Henry Colbron. By 1643, he was on London's Common Council and involved in the controversies of the day. In February of that year, he was placed on a committee instructed to review the accounts of City Chamberlain Robert Bateman, who had occupied his position since 1625. Bateman had been put in place by the Court of Aldermen, but the Common Council was increasingly challenging the Aldermen's ability to take such unilateral steps. Four months later, the Council asserted the right of Common Hall to elect the Chamberlain, and so Bateman was subsequently removed from office.[51] Colbron was later named to a committee to consider whether the City government should support a remonstrance being circulated by City militants in March 1643.[52] In early June, he was among a group of aldermen and common councillors

set to meet with members of Parliament to discuss a united negotiating position with the king.[53] Other aspects of his public life suggest that Colbron circulated among the London godly. He had from at least 1643 been an active member of St Antholin Budge Row, which Paul Seaver has described as 'this most Puritan of London parishes' because it consistently placed godly preachers in its lectureship.[54]

Given his background in Kirkham, his working relationship with Parliament, and his involvement in London's godly community, Colbron would have been in the target audience for a pamphlet published in 1646 that reported on the recent birth of a headless baby in Kirkham. Written by erstwhile vicar Edward Fleetwood, the pamphlet noted that Kirkham was 'a parish which God hath blessed with good Ministers, and some godly people (though but few) in it; who by the malice of the wicked and prophane Wretches, have been much abused heretofore'. The woman who gave birth to the misshapen child had been heard on many occasions to rail against those who were at war against the king. These statements included the proclamation that 'I pray God, that rather than I shall be a Roundhead, or bear a Roundhead, I may bring forth a Childe without a head.' According to Fleetwood, 'This was a fearfull saying, and taken notice of by divers of her neighbours that heard her speak it.' It was, in their view, 'a great means to provoke God to shew such a testimony of his displeasure against her, by causing her to bring forth this Monster'. Fleetwood gave an account of this incident to Col. John Moore of Liverpool, a member of Parliament, who in turn led the House of Commons to order that it be published 'so all the Kingdome might see the hand of God herein; to the comfort of his people, and the terror of the wicked that deride and scorn them'.[55]

Surely, one way to respond to the pamphlet's call would be to endow godly charities to benefit the people of Kirkham while making sure that they would not be governed by Kirkham's recusant elite. Several depositions in the Chancery case between Kirkham and the Drapers' Company suggested that Colbron intended his benefactions to be a sign of his gratitude to the people of Kirkham who had contributed to the costs of his initial journey to London.[56] Given his personal views and his possible connections to those such as Isabel Berely who had attempted to prevent Catholics such as the Cliftons from controlling the school, it is not surprising that Henry Colbron did not want to entrust his charity to the hands of Kirkham's council.[57] His bequest was an act of kindness, but by reducing the Clifton family's influence in local affairs, it was also the alehousekeeper's revenge.[58]

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The people of seventeenth-century Kirkham defined their parish in utilitarian ways. The Kirkham councillors wanted Goosnargh to be in their territory when they collected monies for church repair, but not when it came time to distribute Henry Colbron's largesse. The people of Goosnargh wanted the right to attend sermons by preachers who lacked the approval of Kirkham's vicar, and yet they also wanted their children to enjoy the benefits of a parish school. Clearly, the legal definition of a parish was hardly the final word on the religious identities of its inhabitants. Parishioners commingled custom and theology in ways that best suited their desire to find a community of faith for themselves and this desire was not necessarily constrained by geography. Natives of Kirkham and Goosnargh could move to London and yet remain interested in the politics of religion in Lancashire while at the same time local residents could provide a warm reception to an itinerant preacher from another county. Kirkham and Goosnargh were the settings for religious practice and local residents cared enough to fight over the control of traditional religious institutions, but they hardly could have claimed to have been religiously autonomous even if, at times, families such as the Cliftons may have fantasized about a bygone era in which they held firmly the reigns of local power.

The trials and tribulations of Kirkham and Goosnargh shed light on the legacy of successive waves of religious reform in Lancashire. Elizabethan and early Stuart godly vicars often faced hostility, but they likely also influenced parishioners such as Isabel Berely and Henry Colbron. The Interregnum religious experiments flowing from Westminster encouraged the further disintegration of the parish into smaller communities with separate sensibilities. In the Restoration era, the contrast between the neglectful Vicar Clegg and the itinerant antinomian Hartley could not have been greater, and the efforts of Henry Colbron and his allies in the Drapers' Company to impose their version of godly reform in Kirkham intensified dissension. By contesting the Drapers' Company's control of Colbron's estate, rather than merely seeking through litigation to block the construction of a school at Goosnargh, the leaders of Kirkham sought to impede the further encroachment of national patronage networks into their locality. Given the controversies sparked by earlier efforts of godly reformers such as Edward Fleetwood, it should not be surprising that the Kirkham elite were unexcited by the prospect of Londoners – especially Londoners who were allied with Colbron – sending a preaching schoolmaster to their community. We will never know if Fleetwood's pamphlet about the headless baby inspired Colbron to act, but it was certainly the case

that by bringing London-based resources into Kirkham, Henry Colbron succeeded where Isabel Berely did not. The Chancery's confirmation of the Drapers' Company's authority over Kirkham's school further reduced the autonomy of Kirkham's locally powerful Catholic elite and began a new phase of the Reformation process in Lancashire.

Notes

1. R. Cunliffe Shaw and Helen G. Shaw, *Records of the Thirty Men of the Parish of Kirkham* (Kendal: Titus Wilson & Son, 1930), pp. vii–viii.
2. Henry Fishwick, *The History of the Parish of Kirkham in the County of Lancaster* (Chetham Society, 1874), vol. 92, pp. 136–40; Shaw and Shaw, *Records of the Thirty Men*, pp. 115–25.
3. Fishwick, *History of the Parish of Kirkham*, p. 139; Shaw and Shaw, *Records of the Thirty Men*, p. 125.
4. TNA, Prerogative Court of Canterbury, PROB 11/244/296r–v. Colbron had apprenticed in London with his uncle James Colbron, a native of Freckleton, one of the townships in Kirkham parish, who was a member of the Scriveners' Company. Henry Colbron's apprenticeship ended at his uncle's death in 1624; *Scriveners' Company Common Paper 1357–1628 with a Continuation to 1678*, ed. F.W. Steer (London: London Record Society, 1968), pp. 39, 57, 58, 60; TNA, Prerogative Court of Canterbury, PROB 11/142/456v.
5. Drapers' Hall Archive (hereafter DHA), Rc. 12/7.
6. DHA, Rc. 5/3/9–10.
7. DHA, Rc. 5/1/1–8.
8. DHA, Rc. 5/1/1. This document is bundled with that mentioned in note 4.
9. DHA, Rc. 5/6/24.
10. C. Haigh, *Reformation and Resistance in Tudor Lancashire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975).
11. Christopher Hill, 'Puritans and "The Dark Corners of the Land"', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 5th ser., 13 (1963), 77–102; Joseph P. Ward, 'Godliness, Commemoration, and Community: The Management of Provincial Schools by London Trade Guilds', in Muriel C. McClendon, Joseph P. Ward, and Michael MacDonald, eds, *Protestant Identities: Religion, Society, and Self-Fashioning in Post-Reformation England* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999), pp. 141–57, 323–6.
12. N. Tyacke, ed., *England's Long Reformation 1500–1800* (London: UCL Press, 1998), p. 22.
13. Daniel C. Beaver, *Parish Communities and Religious Conflict in the Vale of Gloucester, 1590–1690* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998), pp. 323–4.
14. J. Spurr, 'The English "Post-Reformation"?', *The Journal of Modern History* 74 (2002), 103. Recent works explicitly located in the Post-Reformation era include N. Llewellyn, *Funeral Monuments in Post-Reformation England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000); P. Lake with M. Questier, *The Antichrist's Lewd Hat: Protestants, Papists and Players in Post-Reformation England* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002); and P. Phillippy, *Women,*