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Banwell Screen and Rood-Loft

by C. S. Taylor
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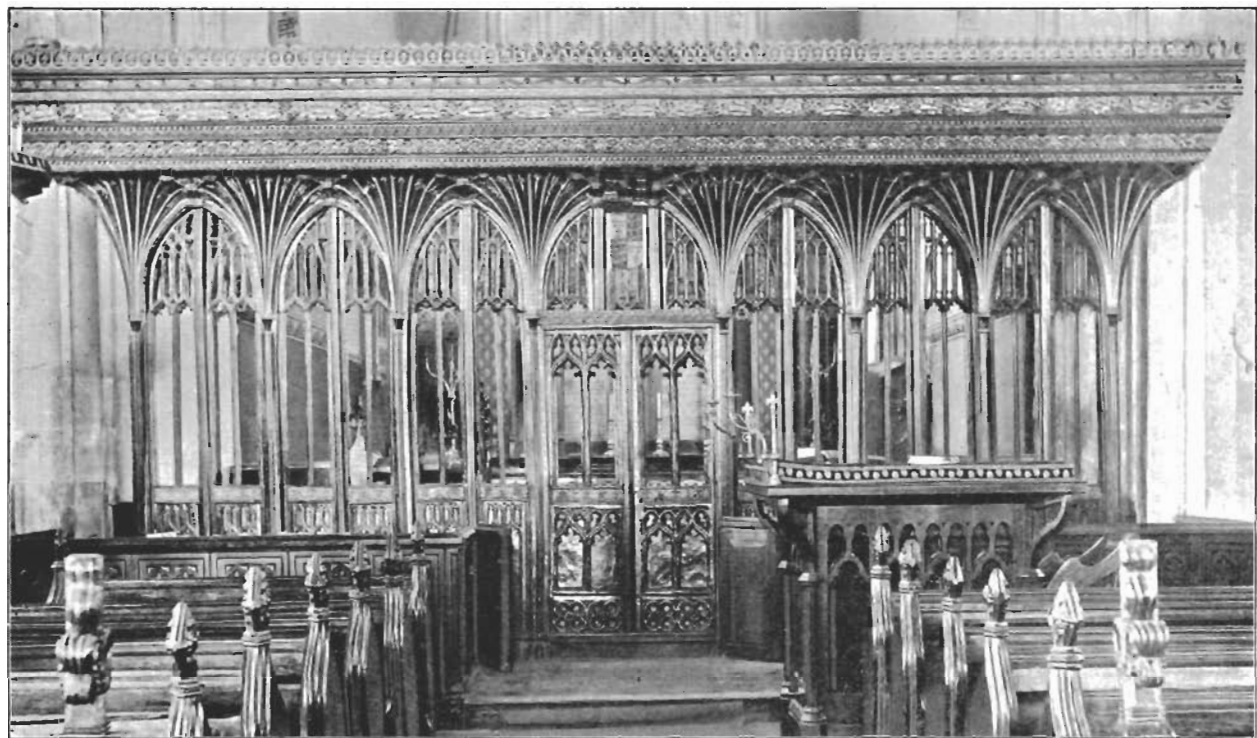
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BANWELL SCREEN AND ROOD-LOFT.¹

BY THE REV. C. S. TAYLOR, M.A., F.S.A.,
Vicar of the Parish.

No apology is needed for inserting an account of Banwell rood-loft in our *Transactions*, because for by far the greater part of the period covered by this paper, and indeed until about seventy years ago, Banwell was really a Bristol church, being, with its two Chapels of Churchill and Puxton a Peculiar, under the jurisdiction of the Dean and Chapter of Bristol. The Bishop of Bath and Wells could visit the Peculiar in person, but he must come himself, and hold his visitation within the limits of the Peculiar. The church officers would not go outside their Peculiar for visitation. As one of the chief manor houses of the diocese lay in Banwell, this would have caused the bishops no inconvenience, till Bishop Barlow granted the manor to the Duke of Somerset in 1549, and he before his death in 1552 found time to ruin the manor house, so that no bishop has lived there since. In later times the official of the Dean and Chapter of Bristol visited the parish annually to admit the wardens, and the Bishops of Bath and Wells visited personally from time to time. So for the period covered by this paper—from 1515 till the surrender of the Priory of Bruton on April 1st, 1539—the prior was Ordinary of Banwell with its chapels; from that date till the foundation of Bristol Cathedral on June 4th, 1542, King Henry VIII was Ordinary, and from that date till the abolition of Peculiars in 1843 the ordinary jurisdiction lay with the Dean and Chapter of Bristol. In 1594 Dr. John Sanders, Canon of Bristol and Vicar of Banwell, held a visitation at Banwell, and in 1595

¹ Read at the Bristol Evening Meeting, November 11th, 1912.



BANWELL CHURCH—ROOD SCREEN.
(DATE 1521.)

and 1598 the Rev. Edward Green, Canon of Bristol, held visitations, while the Bishop of Bath and Wells visited in 1596. In the early part of the nineteenth century, when the vicarage was held by Canons of Bristol, the Canon-Vicars commonly acted as officials of the Chapter, being thus their own Ordinaries unless the bishop should visit in person.

Banwell is a Somerset parish lying about seventeen miles south-west of Bristol, extending over about five thousand acres, divided into two districts of about equal size, which are still distinct for rating purposes, the Marsh and the Upland, the former consisting of pasture land of excellent quality, the latter, which contains the village, lying for the most part on higher ground. In the twenty years 1571 to 1590 there were four hundred and thirty-eight baptisms, giving an average of twenty-two each year. Applying to this the present annual birthrate of the Union, twenty in one thousand, we see that there must have been in the sixteenth century a population of about 1,100; at the last census there were 1,409 people in the parish. The bishop, who was lord of the manor, and the only large landowner, stayed from time to time at the Court House till the reign of Edward VI, when it was granted to the Duke of Somerset, whose head, however, only stood on his shoulders long enough to enable him to ruin the house. The most important person in the parish would thus have been the bishop's reeve, who was elected year by year by the parishioners from among themselves at the manor court. The land was let out on life leases, and the people evidently formed an independent, prosperous community, governing themselves according to the customs inherited from their forefathers, the parish being probably decidedly more wealthy relatively than it is now.

Pictures of the chancel screen are given in our *Transactions*, vol. xxiii. p. 89, and vol. xxv. pp. 22, 23, the latter giving pictures of the screen itself, the former showing the screen and the chancel arch. On each side of the arch

will be seen a corbel, this marks the point from which the great rood-beam stretched across the arch, and above the arch is seen the figure of an angel, which probably held a rod or chain to steady the crucifix. In some churches the rood or figure of the crucified Saviour, with His mother and His beloved disciple on either side, stood on the screen. This was not so at Banwell; there the figure stood on the rood-beam, and a coloured cloth hung from the beam to the top of the screen. A large candle, the high light or cross light, burned ever before the crucifix, and five lights marked the five wounds of the Saviour, while another candle burned before the figure of His Mother. Such was the Banwell rood-loft whose history we are to consider this evening. It was no small thing. The height from the top of the screen to the rood-beam was about nine feet, and from the rood-beam to the top of the arch was at least twelve feet, and the cross reached to the full height. The crucifix with its attendant figures and its lights would have caught the attention and compelled the worship of everyone who entered the church.

Among the most treasured possessions of the church is a book of wardens' accounts extending from 1515 to 1602, in very good condition, with very few leaves missing. The earliest accounts are for the year beginning on December 6th, 1515. A balance of £45 8s. 3½d. was carried over from the preceding year. The receipts consisted of rents, £1 18s. 10d.; Gifts, £1 10s. 0½d.; and *Hogeling* or collection, £8 13s. 8d.; in all £11 12s. 6½d. The outgoings amounted to: oil and wax, £2 13s. 2½d.; obits, etc., 6s. 7d.; expenses, £3 6s. 2d.; in all, £6 6s. 1½d., so that the balance was increased to £50 15s. 9d. The figures are given as they are written. As the rents disappear after the beginning of the reign of Edward VI, they no doubt belonged to the lights and obits or commemorations of the departed, and they were confiscated with the chantry lands; and the offerings for lights were given for particular purposes; so that the only funds actually

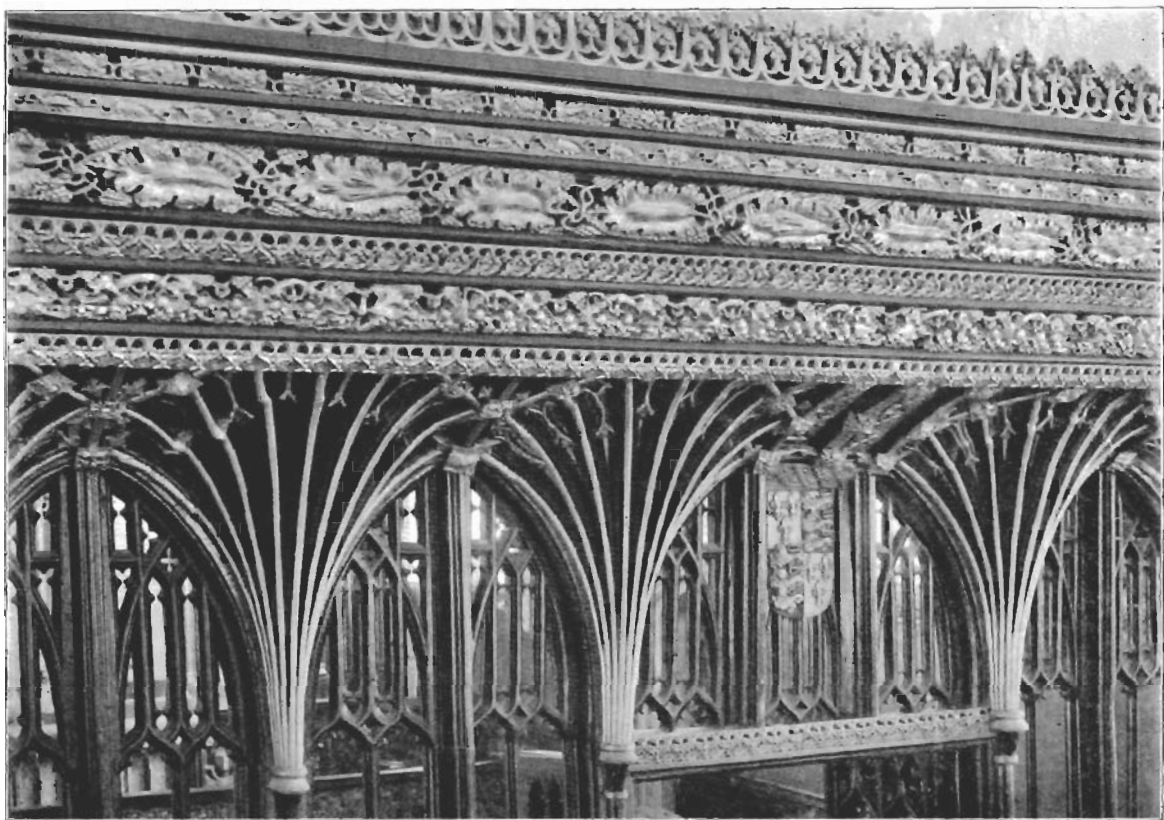
at the free disposal of the wardens arose from the *hogeling* or collection. Every year two *hoglers* or collectors were appointed for the Marsh and two for the Upland, and their combined collection amounted on an average to about £9, or £130¹ in our money. Our collections in church now amount to about £100 annually, and our church expenses to about £84; while, including the lights, the expenses in 1515 would equal about £90 of our money; so that both receipts and expenses amounted relatively to a rather larger sum four hundred years ago than they do now. I do not know the origin or meaning of the word *hogler*, and questions in the *Bristol Times and Mirror* and in *Notes and Queries* brought no information; after the year 1620 they are called *Sidesmen*. The variations in the amount collected from year to year are so great that it is clear that the amounts received were free-will offerings, and did not depend on any exact system of rating.

But the most striking item in the accounts is the amount of the balance, about £680 in our money at the beginning of the year, and £760 at the end. It would be safe to say that very few churches in Gloucestershire, Bristol, or Somerset had anything like that balance last Easter. Yet the balance continued to rise steadily till 1520, when it amounted to £56 10s. 6½d., or £850 in our money; in 1521 it had dropped to £25 13s. 5½d., and in 1522 to £8 3s. 2d., or £120, so that in those two years the wardens had spent sums equal to £730, and the accounts show that the money had been spent on the beautiful screen which is still in the church, and the rood-loft which has disappeared. It is clear that the Banwell people had been saving up money to buy themselves a screen and rood-loft, and the question arises, "For how long had they been saving it up?" Well, at least for the five years from 1515 to 1520. But the saving must have been going on for

¹ A multiplier of 15 is used to bring the sums of that period up to modern values.

much longer than that, for the balance had only increased by £11 in the five years, and at the same rate it would have taken them about twenty-five years to raise £56. This would bring us back to 1495. But the old glass in the east window of the south aisle contains two figures of the rayed sun of Edward IV, who reigned from 1461 to 1483, which most likely fixes its date at that period. It is thought that the nave was completed about 1450; then would come the glazing of the windows, then most likely the benches in the nave, which would seem certainly to belong to that century, were put in; and then the long task was completed by the provision of the beautiful screen and rood-loft some seventy years after the nave was finished. In these hurrying days we do well to think of the wonderful patience and perseverance of those men of old time. They did their work well and thoroughly, and when at last a sufficient sum of money had been collected, the wardens, John Crey and Robert Crede, fully understood that the screen and rood-loft must be worthy of the church. It has been said that Banwell screen was brought from Glastonbury Abbey or Bruton Priory at the dissolution of the monasteries, but we shall see that Banwell people provided their own screen, and a wonderful proof it is of the good taste and munificence of the parish four centuries ago. It was the gift of no-one man or group of men, the whole parish could say, "It is ours;" for the cost had been provided by steady, persistent collecting and saving year after year; it was the work of them all.

So the money, £850, was ready, and we shall find that the work cost nearly the whole of that sum; but the wardens needed the man who could do the work. And so between Michaelmas and St. Nicholas Day, December 6th, 1519, when the year's accounts were made up, we find the entry, "To the Carver, in *yarnest* and at drinking 8d." The bargain was struck, and the carver had received his earnest money to bind him and the wardens to their agreement; and it was ratified, as such things are sometimes ratified even now, by a drinking,



BANWELL CHURCH—ROOD SCREEN FROM PULPIT.

the whole costing about half a sovereign. There was no delay; before the accounts were passed the carver had received £6 13s. 4d., or £100 in our money, no doubt to enable him to purchase timber for the work. The contractor is always spoken of impersonally as "the carver," which would seem to show that he was not a Banwell man. Before Easter Day, April 8th, 1520, the warden, John Crey, with two companions took a journey to St. Erth, a village sixteen miles from Land's End, no doubt to see a rood-loft which was thought to be worthy of imitation, or it may be one which had been set up by the carver whom they had engaged. The cost of their journey is set out in full: Richard Synger, 11 days' wages to St. Erthys, 3s. 8d.; 11 days' horse hire, 4s.; a pair of boots to the same Richard, 1s. 6d.; a horse for John Crey, 4s.; John Morse, wages for 9 days, 2s. 3d.; his horse hire, 3s.; horse meat and man's meat, 20s. 4d.; in all, £1 18s. 9d.; about £29 of our money. Clearly matters were not to be done hastily, and folk would take a great deal of trouble to get a really good thing. St. Erth's Station is 186 miles from Puxton in Banwell, so that supposing the travellers spent ten days on their journey and one day at St. Erth, they must have travelled at the rate of about 37 miles a day, a very probable speed. There is nothing to show who John Morse and Richard Synger were, though it is likely they were craftsmen who would be employed on the work; but it is clear that Richard's boots were a scandal, and quite unfit for the cavalcade of the warden of Banwell, so he was fitted with a new pair at the cost of the church. The cost of the journey works out at about £1 a day for each man in our money, but as we can now travel from Banwell to St. Erth in about seven hours, the trip need only take three days instead of eleven days. But of course both Somerset and Devon contain some of the most beautiful screens in England, and especially if the travellers went by one road and returned by another they might have visited many noteworthy screens by the way. This cannot be done from

a train, and the rapid traveller of to-day misses many things of interest in his flight. Unfortunately we do not know what John Crey found when he reached St. Erth, for there is now no screen or rood-loft there, and the tower is almost the only ancient work which remains.

However, the result of the journey was evidently satisfactory, for as soon as the company reached home the work went forward in earnest. Fourpence was expended on paper to draw a draft of the rood-loft; 1s. 8d. for making the indenture and obligation for the carver; 6s. 8d. was paid to Thomas Long for making the deed; and 7½d. for finding of the said Thomas and costs by the way. The five shillings of our money would buy a good quantity of paper, and it is clear that the draft of the rood-loft must have been set out on a large scale. Folk had been generous in giving their money, but they would see plainly what they would get for it when the time for spending their gifts had come. Thomas Long was no doubt the lawyer who drew the agreement with the carver; it would be interesting to know where the searchers found him, and what were the costs by the way.

The wardens' accounts of course tell nothing about the actual making of the screen and rood-loft, but only about the items of expense involved in its erection. We find three actual payments to the carver, first about November, 1519, when he received £6 13s. 4d.; then in the spring of 1520, £16 6s. 8d.; and lastly about July, 1521, when he received £23 1s. 4d.; in all £46 1s. 4d., or about £700 in our money. That we may say was about the actual contract price paid for the screen and rood-loft. It was relatively a costly work for a village church. The screen at Yatton, set up in 1454, cost over £27, rather more than £400 in our money; that at Ashburton, in Devon, set up in 1525, cost £20, or about £300; even at St. Margaret's, Westminster, the screen and loft cost £38, with £10 for the rood and statues, in all £48, or some £720; so that in one of the most important

churches in London the screen and loft cost about the same amount of money as was paid for similar work at Banwell.¹ There must have been giants in Banwell in those days. I fear we could not do the like now, anymore than we could build the tower or the nave. The writer of the Book of Ecclesiastes tells us, "Say not thou, What is the cause why the former days were better than these? for thou dost not enquire wisely concerning this." Yet the story of the setting up of the Banwell screen and rood-loft may well set us thinking.

The cost may seem large, but we must remember that from the great beam which lies on the floor of the chancel and supports the weight of the screen to the boards which had to take the fine carving in the coving of the loft every inch of timber had to be of the very best. The great beam is apparently as sound as it was when the carver laid it down; if it were to slip or rot the results would be disastrous; all can see how beautifully sharp and clear the carving is after four centuries of exposure to the air. Again, the doors of the screen, as anyone may see, are cut out of single planks of wood; so with the tracery of the windows of the screen, it was not pieced together, but it was cut out of the solid wood, pieces from two and a half to four inches thick being used. Furthermore, there is no machine work in the screen; every curve in the work is the outcome of the skill of hand and wit of brain of the carver. Between November, 1519, when the carver received his earnest money, and July, 1521, when the final payment was made to him, some nineteen months elapsed. None too long a time for so beautiful and elaborate a work. No doubt the rougher work was done by assistants, most likely villagers, while the carver worked out the beautiful fruit and foliage on the coving of the loft; but of course he was really responsible for the whole and every single part. We would gladly know his name, but

"Who works for God, and not for fame,
Will never mark the marble with his name."

¹ *Screens and Galleries in English Churches*, F. Bond, ed. 1908, p. 40.

And there was no list of subscribers ; they and the carver have passed, but their work abides as sound as when it was set up nearly four centuries ago.

So far we have been dealing only with the contract price for the screen and rood-loft, but there were of course extra expenses to be met. About midsummer, 1521, shortly before the final payment, there occur several charges, amounting in all to 1s. 5d. for bread and ale, dinner and wages to men who took down the rood-loft. But before the new rood-loft was put up it would be needful to decorate the figures, so there is a charge of 2s. 8d. for the " painter of Bristol," and other charges of 1s. 10d. for setting up the scaffold to the high cross. Then there is a charge of 8d. for setting back the choir, which shows that the old screen and rood-loft stood a little farther west than the later ones stood. Also, judging from the level of the doorway to the turret stairs on the north side, the older rood-loft was also most likely higher than the present one. For three years nothing more was done, and then before midsummer, 1524, £5 was paid to Robert Hoptyn for gylting in the rood-loft, and for staining the cloth before the rood-loft. Then at last screen and rood-loft stood absolutely complete. Finally, in 1529, the old rood, crucifix and two figures that is, was taken down, carried to Uphill, and sent away by boat at a cost of 3s. 6d. No charge is entered for putting up a new rood-loft, no doubt that was included in the carver's contract. As there is a charge of 4d. for mending the ceiling and pinning it up, it is clear that the crucifix must have been fastened to the ceiling, most likely by the angel above the chancel arch. The sum total of all the charges in connection with the new screen and rood-loft from the engagement of the carver to the removal of the old rood is about £54 4s., some £813 in our money, an amount which proves the wisdom of the wardens in waiting till they had about £850 in hand.

In 1533 the wardens made another step forward, and purchased *organys*, or organs, at a cost of £10, £150 of our

money. Note the plural "*organys*;" very often the old expression was "a pair of organs," but never the singular "an organ." There can be little doubt that this organ, which took the place of another mentioned in 1517, was placed on the top of the screen; and it probably survived till the Civil Wars, when many organs perished. Mr. George Bennett, writing in 1828, said that there had been no organ in the church for more than a century, but that one had lately been procured. The organ of 1828 is still in use. Like its predecessor it was placed on the screen, and there can be little doubt that the appearance of crushing in some of the fan tracery on the west side is due to the weight of these organs. For the last fourteen years of the reign of Henry VIII the parish led a quiet, prosperous existence; the wardens maintained a balance of from £20 to £30, £300 to £450 of our money, but they do not seem to have launched out into any heavy expenditure. No doubt the church was well equipped with all things needful for the reverent conduct of the beautiful service of the use of Sarum, and folks could rest and be thankful.

King Henry VIII died on January 28th, 1547, and prosperity left the Church of Banwell for many a long year. As the new year of the wardens' accounts had begun on December 6th previously, at first everything went on much as usual in the reign of Edward VI. The hoglers were appointed, and brought in their collections, those for the Upland £3 9s. 2d., and those for the Marsh £1 13s. 4d. The amount from the Marsh was small, but the amount for the previous year, £6 os. 6d., had been very large, so that there was nothing unusual in the sum. The services and lights also went on as usual; twenty-four pounds of wax were bought at Easter, no doubt for the paschal candle, and holy oil and a pound of frankincense were procured as before. Trouble began with the Act of Parliament for the suppression of the chantries and guilds.

Henry VIII had destroyed the monasteries, but he had not injured the parish churches; and though about a year

before his death an Act was passed for the dissolution of chantries, hospitals and free chapels, nothing was done in the matter during his reign. But early in 1548 an Act was passed giving to the Crown from the date, April 1st, of Easter following all colleges, free chapels and chantries, all endowments for obits or commemorations of the departed, and for lights, also the property of all guilds or brotherhoods, for the purpose of converting the same to good and godly uses, as the erection of schools, the augmenting of the Universities, and better provision for the poor and needy, as the king's most prudent council would for the honour of God and the good of the realm alter and dispose the same. These, of course, were vain words, and the destruction of the guilds, which were the trade unions and benefit societies of the time, was a barefaced robbery of the poor. By a commission dated May 6th, 1552, the parish churches were to be stripped of all plate and vestments except those needful for divine service. Banwell was a large parish, and two chalices were left, one of which was sold in 1566 for the large sum of £4 11s. 8d., and the other was exchanged in 1573 for the communion cup which is still in use. The guardians of Edward VI also continued the policy of Henry VIII by still further debasing the currency. The English standard money had contained eighteen pennyweights of alloy in twelve ounces of metal; in 1543 the alloy was raised to six ounces in twelve of metal, and in 1545 to eight ounces in twelve of metal, so that two-thirds were dross. Under Edward VI, in 1549, the alloy was six ounces, and in 1551 nine ounces, the nominal shilling in the last case containing less than 2½d. worth of silver. In August, 1551, this vile mixture was officially cried down to half its value, 1s. to 6d., and so forth. We shall see the effect of this on the wardens' accounts for that year. The base money was called in in 1560, and sterling money issued, with the result that in 1564 the wardens were allowed £3 "for the money that did fall."

At the very end of the year 1547 four shillings were spent

on the expenses of four men at Wells, and for the making of their bill; and the next item is for the payment of the expenses of eight men at Wells at the king's visitation, and for the making of a bill, four shillings and four pence. It might seem as if four men were first summoned to give an account of the confiscated endowments in the parish, that their return had been unsatisfactory, and that then eight men had been summoned.

At anyrate, the accounts for the year ending December 6th, 1548, contain no mention of any rents, for they had been confiscated at the preceding Easter, and no offerings for lights, for the king's injunctions of 1547 had forbidden the placing of lights before any image, leaving only two lights upon the high altar before the Sacrament. But though the confiscation of the guild and chantry lands, of the rents for obits or commemorations of the departed, and for lights no doubt caused deep resentment, and though no doubt many people deeply regretted that they were no longer permitted to place lights before the figures of the saints, yet these things would not have affected the wardens so far as the general expenses of the church were concerned. What did affect them was the fact that no hoglers were appointed, and no hogelings or collections for church expenses were made during the last five years of the reign of Edward VI. The wardens lived as best they could on casual sources of income, or on the balance carried on from year to year, which shrank during the reign of that king from £26 13s. or £400 to £7 13s. 8d. or £115. One would think that few wardens can ever have had to present a more dismal statement of account than the wardens of Banwell presented on December 6th, 1551:—

	£	s.	d.
The whole receipts for the year	0	8	4
The whole expenses for the year	8	19	6½
Allowed at this account for the fault of the money	1	13	0
There remaineth in the wardens' hands	5	0	0
And a bill of debt	2	14	8½

Or put into modern money :—			
	£	s.	d.
The whole receipts of this year ..	6	5	0
The whole expenses of this year ..	130	0	0
Lost by debasement of the coinage ..	24	15	0
Balance in cash in the wardens' hands ..	75	0	0
Bill of debt of some defaulting warden ..	40	0	0

Present-day wardens may be thankful that they did not live in the days of the boy king. It is evident that folk had learned a lesson from the confiscation of the property of the chantries and guilds, and that the Government was so thoroughly distrusted, that people would neither collect nor give money for church expenses which might be confiscated and spent on the pious uses of the Dukes of Somerset and Northumberland.

No long time elapsed before smashing began. The third of the injunctions of Edward VI, issued in July, 1547, ordered that all images which had been abused or censed should be taken down and destroyed. Early in the year 1548 the wardens sold an old rood-loft for 2s. This was probably done simply for the sake of the money, for the existing rood-loft was not taken down till after Easter, April 1st, when, as we shall see, it was not destroyed. The first thing that was smashed was the cross in the churchyard, for before Easter the wardens had received 13s., or nearly £10, for the iron contained in it. The large sum would seem to show that this iron was of an ornamental character. At St. James's Fair in Bristol the wardens bought some new books for the church, no doubt some of those ordered by the injunctions, for 14s., or £10 10s.

The first Act of Uniformity was passed in January, 1549, and the "new book for the church," for which and its carriage the wardens paid 4s. 4d., was no doubt the first English Prayer Book of Edward VI, which was to be brought into use at Pentecost. Towards the end of the year the wardens sold "the gylting of the rood-loft" for 8s.; a twyrle of the

rood-loft to John Quarre for 1s. 8d. ; the images of the rood-loft to John Barton for 2s. ; and to master vicar " the great book of the Church " for 10s. We would gladly hope that these sacred things were sold to those who would care for them. It would seem likely that this was so, for we shall hear of some of them again. They also sold the stones of three altars in the church to master John Payne ; there is a difficulty about this, because no order was made to destroy altars till 1550. These may have been old altar slabs ; or they may have been the existing altar slabs sold in anticipation of an order of destruction, and this is more likely, for the pulling down of altars had already begun in many places.

Early in 1550 there is an item, " Paid for the righting of the rood-loft 20s. ; also tree (timber) and nails thereto 6d. " Though the figures and ornaments of the rood-loft were taken away, the great rood-beam remained across the chancel arch, and the wardens repaired the injury which had been done by the removal of the rood. There is an item of £1 6s. 8d. to William Glazier for mending the windows in the church, a consequence very likely of an outburst of destructiveness. In the Journal of Edward VI under the date November 20th, 1550, it is recorded that " there were letters sent to every bishop to break down the altars. " The letter to Bishop Ridley of London, dated November 24th, is extant. It orders " that with all diligence all the altars in every church or chapel, as well in places exempted as not exempted, within your said diocese be taken down, and instead of them a table to be set up in some convenient part of the chancel. " Accordingly, we find payment of 1s. 8d. for taking down the altars in the church, and 8s. for ridding the foundations thereof ; and immediately after a payment of 8s. to John Wylde for making the table for the Communion. The work was quickly done between November 20th and December 6th, when the accounts were made up. Bishop Barlow, who was then at Wells, would not have hesitated in a matter of destructiveness of that kind ; and in any case,

the wardens may well have thought if the thing had to be done it were well done quickly.

John Wylde's communion table, however, did not give satisfaction, and in 1551 another, and presumably a better one, was made by Robert Perkyngs at a cost of 11s. In the same year 5s. 2d. was paid for books brought from London for the church. This was the year of the dismal account, and little was done.

In 1552 the wardens raised a good deal of money by the sale of church property. From master vicar they received 15s. 6d. for the cloth that hanged before the rood-loft; from William Bond 2s. for a banner of silk; and from George Webbe 1s. for a banner of cloth. They received also 13s. 4d. for a clock which was in the church and to William Brasier of Wells they sold a quantity of brass at 2½d. a pound for £1 8s. 4d.; this would imply a weight of 136 pounds of brass, and no doubt represented such things as lamps, pyxes, censers, candlesticks, and other ornaments of divine service. The serious condition of the king's health was concealed; if the wardens had known it, they would no doubt not have sold these things; for of course after his death on July 6th, 1553, the old order of service was again brought into use, to the evident joy of Banwell. It was ordered that the second Prayer Book of Edward VI should come into use on All Saints' Day, 1552, and the payment after midsummer in that year of 8s. for two new books for the church represents, no doubt, the purchase, very likely at St. James's Fair at Bristol, of a copy or two of this new Prayer Book.

It is difficult for us, with the recollection of the miseries of the later years of Queen Mary's reign before us, to realise that her accession was hailed with joy by the people generally as a great national deliverance from the tyranny and misgovernment of the Privy Council.¹ The Banwell folk took

¹ The earliest mention of the bells of St. Thomas the Martyr, Bristol, is an item of xiiid. in the wardens' accounts for ringing at the coronation of the Queen, the Queen being Mary Tudor.

heart of hope at once, and though only five months would elapse between the death of King Edward and the end of the wardens' year, they raised £4 11s. 10d., about £69, to help to put the affairs of their bankrupt and desolated church in order. They paid the curate of Christon the large remuneration of 3s. 4d., £2 10s., for a sermon which he preached to them, no doubt a moving discourse on the blessings to be expected from the reign of Queen Mary. And though Queen Mary's Act of Repeal only annulled the new English service books from December 20th, an item, "For bread and wine to the Sunday before Michaelmas Day, 11s.," would seem to show that at Banwell the old order of services was brought into use again as early as Michaelmas. Furthermore, at the first annual vestry meeting after the Queen's accession hoglers were once more appointed, and the collection amounted to £6 18s. 4d., or £100, a very fair sum considering the collection already made. This collection was regularly made thereafter.

It will not be needful to go through in detail the work done in the reign of Queen Mary. It consisted of an attempt to make good with scanty resources, and in all too short a time, the havoc which had been wrought in the days of her brother. The rood-loft was certainly set up again, for it is mentioned, and it was taken down in the reign of Queen Elizabeth; but there are no charges for setting it up. We may hope that the cloth which was painted and set up before the rood-loft was the old one which Robert Hoptyn had stained in 1524, which master vicar had bought in 1552, and that he now gave it back. And as there are no charges for the figures of the rood, we may hope that John Barton, who had bought the old ones in 1549, also gave them back. As it is distinctly said that William Bond, who had bought the silk banner for 2s. in 1552, sold it back to the wardens for the same price in 1555. The high altar was repaired before Easter, 1554, and the two side altars set up again in 1556; also in that year the head was replaced on the cross in the churchyard. A

cross was bought at St. James's Fair in 1554, and there are charges for service books for the priest, and for books of music, also for repairing and tuning the organ. It is curious that the only vestments made during Queen Mary's reign were surplices, though other *vestments* are mentioned. Of course, the use of the old vestments continued under the first Prayer Book of Edward VI until within seven months of that king's death, and no doubt they had remained in the church. It took ten or twelve yards of material to make a surplice, which must therefore have been a "full" garment, and not one of the skimpy kind now so common. The clerk received £3 for arrears of wages in 1557, equal to four and a half years' pay; in fact, he seems to have been paid very irregularly, if at all, since midsummer, 1552.

In 1557 the wardens paid £3, £45 of our money, for a tabernacle, or pyx, in which the Blessed Sacrament was reserved, suspended, and veiled before the high altar. And finally in the last year of Queen Mary's reign they paid to John Cary 10s. 8d. in part payment of 15s. for the great book of the church; as this book had been sold to master vicar for 10s. in 1549, it would seem that it had passed from his possession, and that the present owner was trying to make a profit out of it. The book would, however, have been useless after the accession of Queen Elizabeth, and no entry appears of the payment of the balance due.

Queen Mary died on November 17th, 1558; and in 1559 royal injunctions were issued by Queen Elizabeth which provided for the removal of altars, though they did not directly order their removal. No doubt as a consequence the altars in the church were taken down at a cost of 3s. 8d. It is evident that no danger was anticipated to the rood-loft at this time, for soon after 6s. 8d. was paid to a painter for "cloths in the rood-loft, and for setting up the same." There were visitations at Wells and Axbridge, no doubt in connection with the royal visitation held in that year, but nothing seems to have resulted except expenses. The ornaments

rubric of the Prayer Book of Queen Elizabeth ordered that the ornaments in use in the second year of King Edward VI should again be used. So in 1560 we find a charge for gilding a pyx. In 1560 also some interpretations of the injunctions were drawn up by Archbishop Parker, which contain the following passage, "That there be used only but one apparel; as the cope in the ministration of the Lord's Supper, and the surplice in all other ministrations." So we find a payment to the clerk for mending a cope in that year, and in 1561 the purchase of a yard of red silk for the new cope. It is clear that there was more than one cope, and as the copes were kept in repair, no doubt they continued in use at Banwell in the reign of Queen Elizabeth. There was a visitation at Wells in 1560, no doubt the metropolitcal visitation for which Archbishop Parker had issued his commission to Bishop Berkeley on August 8th in that year; and in 1561 there were visitations at Wells and Axbridge.

Before Easter, March 29th, 1562, there is a charge of 8s. 6d. for "taking down the rood-loft," and subsequently there are other charges for "white-liming the church over the rood-loft," showing that the crucifix reached above the top of the chancel arch, and "for carriage of the timber out of the church." The large sum of 8s. 6d., as compared with 1s. 2d. paid in 1548, when only the figures and ornaments were removed, might seem to show that on this occasion the great rood-beam on which the figures stood was cut away, and that the timber which was carried out of the church was the rood-beam. On the other hand, among the expenses charged in 1566, four years afterwards, is an item, "Paid for the iron work of the rood-loft 5s. 6d.," and also another small charge for the rood-loft, which would seem to show that the beam was still in its place. I could find no mention of it in the accounts for the rest of the century, but that would only show that it needed no repair; and a great beam high above the heads of the people would require little repair. On the

whole, it seems most likely that the beam was not removed at this time, and this conclusion is borne out by the wording of the order issued on October 10th, 1561, under which the rood-loft was evidently destroyed. It is decreed that the rood-lofts "shall be so altered that the upper part of the same with the sollar be quite taken down, unto the upper parts of the vaultes, by putting some convenient crest upon the said beam towards the church."¹ No objection was taken to the beam, in fact it was to be decorated; and very likely the iron work which cost 5s. 6d. in 1566 may have been cresting of the kind ordered. In the same year, 1562, there are charges for mending "the pavement where the grippes were," and for "casting stones and rubble out of the church," amounting to 4s. 6d. The "grippes" were stays to support the altars; and no doubt the "stones and rubble" were the stones of which the altars had been composed.

The screen seems to have remained uninjured from the time of its erection until now, except that it has lost its railing, which is thus described by Rutter,² "In front of the gallery towards the nave is an elaborately carved cornice or border richly gilt, surmounted by an oak panelling and railing, the whole producing a combined effect strikingly rich, light and elegant." It would be interesting to know at what period in the last seventy years of the nineteenth century this railing and panelling perished. The original gilding on the screen remained till 1805, when it was renewed; and the screen was again coloured and gilded as it now is about 1865. In each case care was taken to preserve the original scheme of colouring. The last end of the old order came in 1563. Before Easter there is an item "for mending the place where the holy water stock stood." The mouldings of the canopy still remain on the east side of the south porch. After Easter 4d. was paid to the sexton for taking down

¹ Heylin, *History of the Reformation*, ed. 1849, ii. 361.

² *Delineations of the North-Western Division of the County of Somerset*, 1829, p. 138.

the top of the cross. Note that if the thing had to be done it should be done reverently by an officer of the church. And after Michaelmas 1s. 4d. was paid "for carrying the church stuff to Glastonbury." The word "stuff" here is no doubt used in its old sense of "furniture, belongings;" and there can be little doubt that what was carried away would have contained ornaments of the church and of the minister which were distasteful to someone in authority, which therefore he pronounced to be unlawful, and condemned to destruction. In an age of tyranny and lawlessness on the part of those in authority it would be idle to attempt to discover who gave the order, or what would have been the pretended authority for it.

In 1564 a sum of fourpence was paid to the clerk for blotting out the Trinity in the glass window. Again, as in the case of the cross in the churchyard, we notice that if a piece of destruction had to be done, it should be done by an officer of the church acting under authority, and should not be left to some ignorant fanatic. One last piece of destruction was carried out in 1569, probably as the result of a visit of the Queen's Commissioners to Wells, when a sum of 4s. 2d. was paid for "taking down the rood-loft in the church porch, and making two doors." There is now a room in the south porch lighted by a three-light window, which window, however, did not exist in 1805, when a picture was taken which appears in the *Gentleman's Magazine* for that year. Over the door leading into the church is a niche, and on the west side of the porch is a stone staircase, the top of which does not fit the level of the floor of the existing room. It is evident that the "rood-loft" which was destroyed was a gallery in front of the niche, like the one portions of which still remain at Weston-in-Gordano, and that the staircase led to this gallery. It is also likely that the two doors would have been fitted at the top and bottom of the disused staircase.¹ It is not known what figure the niche

¹ A picture of the door at Weston-in-Gordano will be found in the *Transactions*, vol. xxix., pp. 16, 17.

contained, but it seems scarcely large enough for a crucifix. It is probable that floors in the porches of Somerset churches are nearly always no part of the original design. Another result of the visit of the Queen's Commissioners in 1569 was the purchase of a register book for 1s. 4d., which book is still in existence. After 1563 there is little of Church interest in the book of accounts. As the wardens were the chief officials in every parish, all kinds of secular offices were thrust upon them; and as the church stock formed the only fund of ready money, all sorts of secular charges were paid from it. The wardens had to find armour and keep it in repair, and also gunpowder; they had also to enlist soldiers, to pay them money on enlistment, and to feed them at the muster. The dissolution of the religious houses and the plunder of the guilds had let loose a flood of poverty upon the land, and the wardens became relieving officers on an extensive scale. They provided for apprenticeship, clothing and feeding of children; they gave alms to poor scholars of Oxford, who collected them on their way to or from the University; they were the victims of sturdy beggars who carried briefs, whom they dignified with the name of "Proctors." Furthermore, they were the guardians of public morals, and we find them not infrequently taking to Wells offenders against decency to be presented to the bishop, no doubt for the imposition of penance. Sometimes, indeed, penance was profitable. In 1571 the wardens received 10s. of "Thomas Hill for his penance." Police duties also were laid upon them, and from 1573 they paid an annual contribution to the common gaol; at first 4s. 4d., and then double the amount each year. Also they were obliged to pay the cost of conveying to the gaol offenders who were taken in the parish.

Altogether, of course, these various expenses mounted up to a large sum; in some years certainly more was spent in these ways than on the maintenance of the church and its services. The hoglers grew slack in their collections. Both in 1566 and in 1578 resolutions were passed laying

heavy fines on hoglers who had not completed their collections by the end of the year ; but very often they were still behind-hand. In 1577 Thomas Kene of Combsbury gave the wardens 1s. "his gift to the parish, for want the hoglers did not ax it." An early instance of conscience money, and also of the old Saxon of Somerset.

Very likely the people lost interest in the matter, for the hogeling no longer provided by means of savings for special expenses. In 1596 a parchment book was made for recording church gifts for repairing the church ; and in 1600 the tenor and third bells were recast, and other work was done, costing in all £56 1s. 5d., about the sum of money which the wardens had in hand in 1520 when they set up the screen and rood-loft. But while eighty years before this sum was obtained from the savings of the hogeling, in 1600 a special appeal, apart from the hogeling, and in addition to it, was needful.

It would be interesting to know whether it was usual in country parishes to carry over such large balances as the Banwell wardens were accustomed to carry. After the special expenses of the screen and organ had been met the balances varied between 1534 and 1546 from £20 8s. 8d. to £34 11s. 2d. During the reign of Edward VI the amount sank to £7 13s. 8d., gradually rising again by the end of the reign of Queen Mary to £12 10s. 1d. By 1562 the amount had risen to £32 1s. 8d. Thus in ordinary times the wardens were accustomed to carry over year by year £300 or £400 of our money. At St. Thomas the Martyr, Bristol, in 1563 the sum which "goeth from proctors to proctors" was only £4 10s., or about £60. The money was held by the wardens, not jointly, but in two shares, no doubt to guard against loss. The tenacity with which the wardens clung to their balance is shown by the fact that even at the end of the disastrous reign of Edward VI they had £7 13s. 8d., or more than £100 in hand.

So we have followed the history of the fortunes of Banwell Church from about the date of the birth of Queen Mary

to that of the death of Queen Elizabeth. We have seen how an ordinary country parish fared in the prosperous days of Henry VIII, under the debased Protestantism of Edward VI, through the ferocious Papalism of Queen Mary, and the starved and secularised church system of Queen Elizabeth; and a study of this kind of the facts at first hand ought to be very helpful in enabling us to understand what the Tudor Reformation of the Church of England really was to those who lived under it. Happily it did not spell the last word in our Reformation story.