NOT AS BY LAW ESTABLISHED? WAS THERE A SEPARATIST MOVEMENT IN EARLY MODERN THANET?

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Unorthodox religious opinions were among the social networks and relations studied in the author's work on early modern Thanet.[1] There is evidence, if we accept the witness of will preambles, of possible 'protestant' leanings amongst the Thanet population, but the question needs to be asked 'Was there a separatist group there?' There were also people cited for non-attendance at their parish church and some clergy were accused of being lax in their observances. Modern views range from those who would say there were separatist groups to those who would agree with Lutton that 'full blown separatism does not appear to have emerged before the 1640s in the form of Baptist and Independent chapels and sects'.[2] Quested claims that 'later in the 16th century various sectarian tendencies definitely became established here'.[3] Her main examples of this trend are William Cleybrooke and the Vicar of St Nicholas 'a non-conforming puritan' of both of whom we will have more to say. She gives no source for this statement or her claim that 'by the end of the 16th century separatist or semi-separatist groups were especially active in Thanet and villages in the Dover area'. She seems to have confused 'sectarian tendencies' with the desire for a further reform of the church, and the desire for a Presbyterian style of church organisation. Cleybrooke was definitely in favour of this mode of government, but does not appear to have joined a breakaway group.[4] The establishment of a 'reforming pulpit' at St John's in 1617-18 hardly implies a separatist group but rather an attempt to further reform the established church. Quested notes that the Puritan movement is not mentioned again till the 1640s.[5] The present writer has not researched the Dover area but is unconvinced that there were in fact groups outside or separate from the various parish churches in Thanet. The local sources used in the original thesis do not mention the word separatist at all.[6] Simpson thought that 'it can be said with confidence ... that from 1585 onwards the parish elite (at St Nicholas at Wade) in terms of wealth were Protestants'.[7] Protestant, however, is a description fraught with problems of interpretation, and the conclusion of Simpson's research into tithe disputes in Canterbury diocese is that conflicts over religious practice between clergy and parishioners often owed more to local power and status disputes than to religious belief.

Technically the church in England was not 'protestant' as no English divines had signed the 'protestatio' of 1529 at the imperial Diet held at Speyer in that year. MacCulloch tells us that for decades although current in the Holy Roman Empire it did not have a wider application than that, and while Edward VI's coronation

procession had a place for 'the Protestants', this referred to those representatives of the reformed Germans staying in the capital.[8] It was not a term which those later called 'Protestants' generally used of themselves preferring the term 'the godly', and it was usually used in a derogatory sense by their opponents. Peter Marshall has surveyed the history of the use of the word by reformers and their critics alike.[9] MacCulloch also uses the description 'magisterial Reformation' (or mainstream) which (like its catholic opponents) 'assumed the whole nation was entrusted to them for pastoral care and guidance on the way to eternal life',[10] which was the case in England as well as such places as Calvin's Geneva or John Knox's Scotland. There were groups who worshipped separately from the established church[11] some of whom had been doing so since Marian times, but Alec Ryrie claims that 'For most Puritans the aspiration to establish a universal godly Church and the obligation not openly to defy the queen's proceedings, ensured that they would not venture into schism'.[12]

In the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries Kent had been known as a centre of Lollardy and earlier in the sixteenth century one of the leaders of the Free Will men may have been the Kentish Henry Harte of Pluckley, who was the subject of a letter from Cranmer to Cromwell concerning 'unlawful assemblies' and who may have also been known to the Marian martyr Nicholas Ridley, who had been the minister at Herne, near Thanet.[13] Acheson notes Ash and Sandwich as places with conventicles between 1590 and 1640,[14] both neighbouring Thanet and with many connections with the Isle. He lists several other places with citations for non-attendance at church, but cautions that not all those so cited were absent for religious reasons; possibly the zeal of those responsible had more to do with it. As we shall see, there was non-attendance in Thanet as well, but can we therefore assume that there was a separatist group there?[15] Burrage notes Ashford and Maidstone as strongholds of the Brownists, but none of the Thanet documents mention this sect by name.[16]

In order to attempt to discover whether there was a separatist group in Thanet this paper examines a series of questions:

- the position of William Cleybrooke as an example of religious radicalism;
- naming practices as possibly influenced by the Reformation;
- inter-marriage in Thanet;
- religious cases in the ecclesiastical courts and accusations made during visitations concerning non-attendance at church, and related matters.

Finally there is a brief survey of will preambles – this is a contentious subject, with disagreement between those who think it reveals the religious belief of individuals and those who would argue that it does not, though it may show general trends in particular areas and is more likely to be ascribed to the use of 'pattern books' by the writers of the will. It is difficult to assess whether writers of wills were chosen because they shared the opinions of the testator or because there was not a wide range of people capable of carrying out this task.

William Cleybrooke

The evidence concerning William Cleybrooke, a member of a local gentry family,

is somewhat contradictory. Against his ownership and reading of schismatic books, the visits he received from Thomas Cartwright (a known critic of the established church and in favour of Presbyterianism)[17] and his description of Archbishop Whitgift as 'a tyrant for persecuting the children of God' and especially Mr Udall,[18] must be set the fact that he denounced the Vicar of St Nicholas at Wade as a 'non-conforming puritan' – an odd statement if he was himself in favour of leaving the established church and, in any case, at this period 'puritans' were those intent on purifying the church, not those who left it. They preferred to call themselves 'the godly'. Dr Doreen Rosman notes that in the sixteenth century, the term 'non-conformist' meant a member of the Church of England who wanted more reform not someone who had left the national church.[19] The case against Cleybrooke appears to rest largely on his persecution of Robert Jenkinson, the conservative Vicar of St John's, the parish where he lived at the end of his life, and various anti-establishment remarks witnessed by Simon Stone, Vicar of both St Peter's and St Lawrence parishes.

Between 1584 and 1589 Cleybrooke was cited several times to the Archbishop and was accused of declaring that the Book of Common Prayer, especially *Magnificat* and *Nunc Dimittis*, could not be read with a good conscience; referring to the clergy as Queen Mary's priests; miscalling the Bishop of London and describing the Archbishop of Canterbury as 'pope of Lambeth and John of Canterbury'.[20] His feud with Robert Jenkinson may have been more of the same, but could also be seen as a personal quarrel. He tried to set other parishioners against the vicar; he quarrelled with his kinsman William Norwood in church; he took his two sons and his servants to football during service time. William Norwood may have been the member of the Norwood family who died in 1596 and whose will showed him to have been chaplain to 'John Cantuar', that same 'John of Canterbury' whom William Cleybrooke was accused of miscalling.[21] Cleybrooke was also accused of non-attendance at church, was contentious and argued with the minister. Apparently he also incited his sons and servants to 'abuse the church in ringing the bells att times inconvenient and when they may not have the key'. All this culminated in an incident reported by one Richard Cosen, when William and his elder son Paul waylaid Jenkinson in the yard by John Maynard's house and threatened him with cudgels to make him break a bond of peace. Included in the same document which recounts the story of this fracas is the statement that Mr Compton of Town Sutton (Sutton Valence) preached at St John's that the people should elect their ministers. The implication is that Cleybrooke was in agreement with this Presbyterian-sounding doctrine.

Clark repeats a comment made about Cleybrooke that 'there have not been any contentious or schismatic books at any time printed' but he either owned or had read them. At the time of the altercation with the vicar, his son Paul was said to be in possession of a 'filthy Italian Booke'. Reading and even owning a book does not of course necessarily mean agreeing with it, but those making this comment clearly thought he did; and was Paul's 'filthy book' a religious one or simply pornographic? Cleybrooke senior's will, a comparatively short and simple document, unfortunately does not list any books. Books rarely feature in Thanet wills, but the few that do appear, not perhaps surprisingly, to be of a reformed nature. John Allen the elder left money to the parish of St John's for a copy of

Foxe, and James Bromwell, Vicar of Minster, left *Calvin on Jobe* to Thomas Parramore of Ash, and a Bible to Mr Peter Manwood. Bromwell had also been asked to preach at the burial of Jeremy Fanting (a neighbour of Paul Cleybrooke's at St John's) and as the vicar was the conservative Robert Jenkinson, this may also indicate unconventional attitudes or, again, merely a personal vendetta against the vicar. A Bible worth 5*s*. owned by Edward Smith of Monkton was included in the inventory of his goods.[22]

It is clear that William did hold opinions frowned upon by the establishment and that his contemporaries, or at least those in authority, considered him to be a threat to peace; he was about to be investigated by the Court of High Commission when he died. However, it is difficult to see him as part of a network. He seems to have been much too prone to argue with everyone and in none of the records examined for this paper is he accused of belonging to a separatist group. As noted he had Presbyterian opinions and thought the church did not conform to the New Testament tradition and needed further reformation, but there seems to be no evidence of him wishing to separate from it. What he appears to have desired, as did other 'godly' people, was a more thorough reformation of the English Church to purge it of the remnants of Catholic practices and to organise it in a more Presbyterian way.

Christian names: 'godly' and traditional

Withycombe states that 'The change in nomenclature which followed the Reformation was second in importance only to that caused by the Norman Conquest'. These changes, she adds, affected female names even more than masculine ones, as some of the most popular female names had been those of unscriptural saints such as Agnes, Cecily, Katherine and Margaret. She appears to be implying that using these new names could be evidence of Protestant or anti-Catholic tendencies. Redmonds disagrees that names went out of use in the way she claims, and it is certainly not completely true of Thanet, where Agnes, Margaret Cecily and Mildred (a local saint) retained their popularity during the later part of the sixteenth century. There are 82 instances of Agnes in the Thanet baptism registers, 83 in the marriage registers. And 13 given as the spouse's name in local wills.[23]

Several names which, according to Withycombe, were not found until after the Reformation, or which she claimed did not appear until the seventeenth century, appear in the Thanet baptism registers at this time. The most common female names of this kind are Sara and Martha, which occur 35 times each, Rebecca (13), Rachel and Priscilla (6). With exception of Priscilla, these are all taken from the Old Testament. Priscilla with her husband Aquila is mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles, as well as in the epistles of Paul to the Romans, the Corinthians and to Timothy.[24] The male names are Joseph (11), Zacharias or Zachary (9), Abdias (a version of Obadiah) and Manasses (3 each)[25] and Ezekiel (2). Several of the female names appear in Paul's Letter to the Romans, a core text of reformed religion. Triphena and Trifosa, which appear once each in the baptisms for different families in Thanet, are also found in that Epistle, as is the male name Philologus: Philologus Hall married Margaret Allen 1579. As it translates as 'lover of the word' it could have been chosen for its reformed associations.[26]

These names are all Biblical and possibly only show the impact of Bible reading

in English among the laity, whether at home or in church. Only two names occur which might be said to conform to the popular idea of 'puritan' names: Obey and Godly, both used for females in Thanet. One of these was Godly Johnson, daughter of George Robinson. William Cleybrooke married into the Johnson family, so this could be a connection with religious radicalism. Tyacke found Obedience as a male name among other eccentric names in what he calls 'the heartland of puritan nomenclature, east Sussex and the Kentish border', but he links their use to the influence of Dudley Fenner of Cranbrook and other 'godly' ministers.[27] In his list of popular puritan names only Constance (usually in the form 'Custance') and Obey/Obedient are found in Thanet.[28] He includes among popular 'non-puritan' names three (Sara, Priscilla and Obadiah) included among those new names listed by Withycombe, which have been found in Thanet. He also notes the continuing popularity of Mary, which Withycombe in the 1977 edition of her work, claimed was rarely used during Elizabeth's reign. It occurs 280 times in the Thanet baptism registers, 101 in the marriage registers, and was borne by 11 named spouses in wills. The continuing popularity of this and other traditional names, both male and female, set against the comparatively low incidence of 'new names' implies that parents chose names they liked or which had family connections, rather than using their children's names to make a statement about their own unconventional religious opinions, if indeed they had any.[29] The 'traditionalist' Robert Jenkinson was Vicar at St John the Baptist in Thanet for most of the last third of the sixteenth century, and this might have had some influence in blocking the use of 'radical' names, but again, no firm evidence has come to light.

Marriage as a statement of belief

The population of Thanet in the early modern period was small which may have limited the range of choice of marriage partners[30] but Cowper's work on marriage licences shows that all classes looked outside the island for spouses.[31] No overt links through marriage have been found between the families who used the new names. There are two examples of Thanet families marrying members of families with reformed connections, though how important this consideration may have been in the formation of the marriage is difficult to say. Paul Cleybrooke, who as we have seen came from a family at least suspected of radical religious leanings, and whose imposing monument is in St John's church, married Mary Knatchbull of the Mersham family. In his history of the family, Knatchbull-Hugessen refers to Sir Norton Knatchbull (1569-1636) as having married first Anne Wentworth, daughter of Paul, who with his brother Peter was a 'puritan' leader in the House of Commons during Elizabeth's reign, and second Bridget Astley, daughter of John, who was a cousin of Anne Boleyn.[32] Boleyn is well known to have been favourable to the reformed religion. Mary Cleybrooke's mother Joan was a half sister to Sir Norton. Mary's uncle Reynold of Saltwood married Anne Crispe, daughter of that William Crispe who was Lieutenant-Governor of Dover Castle with connections to the Birchington family. If we assume that Reynold is the same man as Ragnoldus Knatchbull both he and William Crispe acted as godparents in Birchington.[33] Godparenthood was not regarded favourably by 'puritans' who saw it as a relic of Catholicism.

Another marriage which may have linked families with similar religious views was that of Rachel Cranmer of Canterbury with John Blowfield of St John's, where her death is recorded on a brass in the parish church. She was the daughter of Thomas Cranmer, great nephew of the martyred archbishop. Her sister married a son of Alexander Norwood (obit 1583). Cranmer's will and that of his daughter Anne were witnessed by members of the Norwood family, who were also marriage kin of the Cleybrooke family. The will of John Blowfield the elder, Rachel's father-in-law had a long preamble showing godly tendencies. These shared religious views may well have been part of the reasons for the various marriages though this is not now discoverable, but there is no evidence of membership of a separatist group.[34]

Non-attendance and complaints against the clergy

Several Thanet inhabitants were cited at Visitations for non-attendance in church or for not making their communion at the required times. Those who were said to be in places such as the ale house, or engaged in business or roistering in private houses during service times have been disregarded here, as it is probable that less rather than more religious zeal motivated them. During the whole period a total of 15 people from Thanet parishes were accused specifically of missing communion, sometimes regularly. Nine were accused of non-attendance and five for refusing to pay the fine for non-attendance. Some were accused of all three offences. Alexander Violet was cited three times for non-attendance, and once each for not making his communion and refusing to pay his fine. He was usually ready with an excuse such as a dog bite, toothache, or fear of the plague, but others appear not to have produced any excuse. His servant was cited with him in 1603. Several other local gentlemen were also cited for this offence: members of the Norwood family three times, the Fleete family twice, and the Pettitt, Crispe and Cleybrooke families once each. Four married couples were cited together.

Thomas Deale of St John's was apparently absent grinding corn when he should have been in church in 1581, but a year earlier he had been accused of keeping an unlicensed non-attending school master, one Thomas Sandin from Flanders, who had come to him from Mr Henry Crispe. The Flemish connection may well be significant in view of the religious refugees from this area, many of whom settled at Sandwich and Canterbury. There were at least two other accusations of unlicensed teaching in the same parish. John Allsopp in 1591 and Mr Johnson in 1594 were accused of this offence, and in 1606 Mr Jackson was accused of teaching in Mr Parramore's house at St Nicholas. At St Lawrence John Ducket was also accused of unlicensed teaching and together with his wife of not attending communion. The 1569 Visitation for Minster notes one John Bussher, described as a clerk (presumably parish clerk) as teaching reading, writing and singing, but it is not known whether or not he was licensed.[35]

There were also citations against critics of the Book of Common Prayer. We have seen that William Cleybrooke denigrated this book, and his offences led him to be under investigation by the Court of High Commission at the time of his death.[36] In 1594 a man called Richard Sharpe made various anti-Prayer book remarks, which he later retracted. He was told to seek instruction from Mr Simons, of St Nicholas,

or Mr Jenkinson, Vicar of his own parish of St John's. A dislike of the Prayer book is not in itself an indicator of separatist leanings as Catholics also disliked it, though for different reasons.

Some members of the clergy were also presented to the Archdeacon at the Visitation for various infringements of the correct rituals and codes of dress. These complaints were usually that they wore inappropriate dress, omitted parts of the ritual and used common bread for the communion. These were the faults cited in 1569 at St Lawrence, and nine years later the incumbent Simon Stone was said not to wear a surplice or hold the required prayers on Wednesdays or Fridays. In 1584 the minister was still not wearing his surplice. This was also a complaint against the Birchington curate George Atton: he claimed the surplice was a poor one. He was also said not to use the sign of the cross in baptism and not use the legal Book of Common Prayer.

These are similar to the complaints made against James Charles the Vicar of St Nicholas from 1578 until his resignation in 1595. He was the priest whom William Cleybrooke accused of being a 'non-conforming puritan'. In this case the parish clerk, Richard Smallwood,[37] a native of Cheshire, but resident in Kent for 18 years, stated that Mr Charles was 'commonly accepted' as a lawfully ordained minister, but alleged several points where Charles did not observe due forms. These included the omission of the cross in baptism and using an incorrect formula for this sacrament. Instead of the Prayer Book wording ('In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost') he said 'have baptised him in the sayd faithe'. He did not always use the Prayer Book wording on other occasions. Smallwood claimed that he knew this because as parish clerk he said the service with the minister. Another of his accusations was that Charles omitted to announce holy days, so that when Smallwood rang the bell there was no one there to say the service for any parishioners who did attend. Charles' omissions included not reading the Injunctions, not wearing a surplice or the authorised vestments, omitting Wednesday and Friday prayers and rarely catechising. Smallwood also noted that the seat from which he was supposed to read the service had been moved, but in this case the Wardens had consented to a new one at the door of the chancel. Other deponents generally agreed with these details, although Thomas Mussared said that being unlearned he could not depose to the omissions, but had heard others talk of them.[38] There was also a rumour of misconduct with one Dorothy Clarke, for which John Lyon had presented him to the Archdeacon two years previously in his term as Churchwarden.[39] Edward Whitlocke, who repeated the rumour of the adultery, said he had served as Warden, but not since Mr Charles came to the parish.[40] In his own deposition, Charles said he subscribed to the Book of Common Prayer and used it. He did sometimes omit the sign of the cross, but no one had queried his way of doing things before. He said that sometimes he forgot to announce holy days, and told the clerk to do so, or to remind him. After someone had complained, he did not omit anything.[41] These depositions appear to agree with view of Maltby, that many members of the Anglican Church wanted more conformity to the authorised forms and to the Book of Common Prayer. Charles may have been one of the clergy who wanted a more thorough reform of the church than the Elizabethan Settlement had allowed, but the parishioners in this and other local cases give no evidence of wishing to separate from their parish

church, nor is this an accusation made in any of the cases where people were cited for non-attendance.[42]

Will preambles

The final source to be examined to attempt to answer the question about separatism and religious radicalism in Thanet is the preambles to wills. The use of these preambles to assess the personal religious convictions of the testator is fraught with difficulty. Most testators did not write their own wills and there is evidence that the preamble was either a formula favoured by the writer or taken from a book of precedents, examples of which had been available since the first half of the sixteenth century. Writers of wills could be professionals such as notaries, although there is no evidence of these in Thanet, or literate kinsmen, friends or neighbours. Alsop thought that preambles were formulae 'in indeterminate relationship with the specific religious convictions of the testator'. Spufford showed that such precedents could be used over time to assess the beliefs rather of a community than individuals, or least to discover what was felt to be an acceptable form at the time. Unless there is a sequence of wills written by one man over a period, it is difficult to determine whose choice the wording might have been. In Thanet although several men did write wills, there is a dearth of known writers who can be linked to wills with more than a conventional preamble, such as 'I commit my soul to God' or even just 'In the name of God the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost'. Of the known writers of the wills to be considered here, one was a clergyman, one a parish clerk and Church Warden and the status or occupation of the others is unknown. In addition these latter only wrote one will each as far as we can tell.[43]

Spufford, examining the wills of three Cambridgeshire communities, found that scribes tended to use their own formula, but 'one is still getting information on whatever doctrine is generally accepted at village level'.[44] She also notes that when a testator had strong personal religious beliefs, it might be expressed through a variant of the scribe's usual formula, and in any case testators were unlikely to choose a scribe who held completely different opinions from their own. Historians such as Dickens, Zell, and Clark found preambles useful in assessing the trends and changes in religious beliefs from catholic to reforming attitudes between the Reformation Parliament and the reign of Elizabeth.[45] Examining wills in Leeds and Hull, Cross decided they could be used 'with caution to indicate a trend towards a more committed form of Protestantism'.[46] She cautions against assuming too readily that the testator's actual beliefs are expressed in the preamble but decided that in spite of stereotyping 'some authentic confessions of faith can still be found in wills'.[47] Collinson also noted that many wills 'Share a religious preamble which seems to have owed its identical wording to the parish clerk who drew up the wills or perhaps to some formulary where the clerk found it'.[48]

Generally speaking Thanet wills can be said to show a more 'protestant' form after 1557 (the earliest will studied) which is understandable after Elizabeth came to the throne, In three wills between 1557 and 1559 testators committed their soul to God, Our Lady and all the Holy Company of heaven. The fact that three men from various parts of Thanet use the same formula would seem to show that this was an acceptable form at this time. During the reign of Elizabeth most preambles

are as brief as this, but have omitted the Virgin and the saints and merely commend the soul to God, usually as Trinity, but sometimes merely say 'In the name of God, amen' before beginning the body of the will. Richard Sampson's version 'I commytt and bequeath my soule unto Almightye god my maker and redeemer and savower,' is very similar to the model noted by Alsop from the 1543 *Boke of Precedents*.[49]

Others contain a more developed statement of reformed faith, such as that of Elizabeth Baker: 'Firste and above all things, I yelde up and bequeathe my soule into the mercyfull hands of allmightie god the father sonne and holy ghoste a blessed trinitye and one very true god and I hope to be saved by and thorough the merittes passion and bloudshedding of my alone saviour Jesus Christe'. Baker had been a servant to both the Crispe family and their kinsfolk the Brownes. The Crispe family connection with the 'puritan' family of Knatchbull has already been noted. However, this will was written by Richard Shirley parish clerk and Church Warden at Birchington and also a former servant to the family of Crispe, and it varies very little from the preamble to the will of Alexander Norwood of St John's, whose will Shirley also wrote, so it may be his choice rather than hers. The will of Norwood's father Alexander the elder, who died in 1557, had what was probably considered a very 'protestant' preamble for its time. This preamble is shown in the **Appendix**. There is no mention of the Virgin or saints, but there is a request for a month's mind to be kept.[50]

James Charles, Cleybrooke's 'non-conforming puritan', who was minister of St Nicholas, wrote the wills of three of his parishioners, but their preambles were fairly standard. Most of the other preambles which are slightly more elaborate than the basic form are still the conventional statement of justification by faith, and lacking the names of the writers or any further information on possible precedent books available, little more can be said about them. Several others are similar to the examples of precedents quoted in Alsop's article.[51]

One or two of the others show signs of being more individualistic. That of Thomas Best of Monkton (see Appendix) by an unknown writer has a section on the soul which is similar to example 404 in Alsop's article, but this is followed by a section on the body which is unique among these Thanet wills. However, it would appear from an examination of will making by Marsh in *The Records of the Nation* that it is taken from *The Sicke Man's Salve*, by Thomas Becon, which appeared in *c*.1558-9.[52] This raises speculation as to whether Best himself owned a copy, or whether the writer of his will chose the preamble. It also provides evidence that Thanet was not isolated intellectually, although books are not mentioned often enough either as bequests or in inventories for definite conclusions to be drawn from this. Marsh has shown that this work had an influence on other later similar *ars moriendi* works, and was sometimes copied entire.[53] John Blowfield's will (see Appendix) is also unusual and may be significant when we remember the marriage connection between his family and that of Thomas Cranmer of Canterbury (see above). The most individual of all is the preamble to the will of John Mussared the younger of St Nicholas, who died unmarried in 1578. This is completely unlike anything else found in the Thanet records and displays a deep knowledge of scripture, especially John's apocalyptic vision of the New Jerusalem, and the epistles (see Appendix). Unless a further example from a formulary or in another parish comes to light,

it can provisionally be assumed that this is John Mussared's own declaration of faith.[54]

There are too few ascertainable facts regarding these preambles and their writers for statistical conclusions about the incidence of Protestantism in Thanet, though they are clearly not Catholic. But neither do they show or mention any separatist groups or tendencies. The question of the degree of non-conformism in Thanet may be put into context by figures from the middle of the seventeenth century. In Westbere Deanery which included Thanet, the proportion of non-conformists in 1676 was 4.7% and for the diocese as a whole, 54%. Fifty non-conformers were noted at St Lawrence (4% of the population) and 3 at Birchington. In a table listing by 'denomination', those termed 'Non-conformists' for the whole of Thanet numbered 92, with no Roman Catholics and 2,118 'conformists'.[55] Finally it has to be remembered that many of these men acted as godparents, and in other ways took part in the usual life of their local church community, and although some of them were cited to the Archdeacon for absence, it is difficult to link a pious preamble, non-attendance at church and any other evidence of separatism or radicalism in religion to any one individual, and in fact this is not an accusation used in the contemporary records studied here.

Conclusion

Although it is clear that William Cleybrooke and others in Thanet did not altogether agree with the Elizabethan religious settlement and would have preferred what they perceived a more 'biblical' model of the church on Presbyterian lines, the local sources presented here do not give evidence of separatist groups in the area in the late sixteenth century. The accusation of 'separatism' is never given as a reason for non-attendance at the parish church for example, and some of the criticisms of local clergy show that many parishioners wanted more conformity to the established forms from their ministers. Ryrie has described the sixteenth-century English church as 'a Reformed Protestant Church with important idiosyncrasies'.[56] Some Thanet people may well have felt that 'neither the structures not the morals of the English church had yet attained the purity for which they hoped' but there is little if any sign at this period that they wished to separate themselves from it.[57] Even those who may have travelled to hear special preachers were doing so within the parish system, just not their own parish.

It is a mistake to assume the average person at any period would necessarily leave their parish church for a dissenting group unless they had experienced a very strong religious conversion. The average churchgoer at any time tends to follow the practice of their own parish while keeping their own particular views private; any modern Anglican discussion group will exhibit a wide range of different, in some cases quite eccentric opinions, on the faith, without any of the holders having any trouble taking part in the normal services of the church. In many cases 'belonging' is as important if not more so than 'believing'.

APPENDIX

Will preambles quoted:

Alexander Norwood the elder of St John the Baptist (1557), CCAL, PRC 17/34 fol. 174:

> firste and pryncypallye I give and bequeathe my soule unto all mithgye god my maker and Redeemer in whome and by the merits of whose blessed passion is all my whole truste and confidence of Clere Remysson and forgiveness of my synnes. And my body to be buryed in such place as it shall please all mightye god to ordayne and provide for.

Thomas Best the elder of Monkton (1609), CCAL, PRC 32/41 fol. 257v:

> And as for my bodye I willingly and with a free heart give yt over and commend yt to the earth from whence yt came, nothing doubting but at the great and generall daie of resurreccion by the might of godes power to receave this self same body againe not corruptible mortall and vile But incorruptible ymortall strong and perfect in all points lyke unto that glorious body of my Lord and saviour Jesus Christ.

John Blowfield of St John the Baptist (1574), CCAL, PRC 17/42 fol. 104v:

> Being visited in body with gods fatherlie and mercfull correction, but in soule and spirite being in Christ Jesu ground perfitt and also of a good and sounde remembrance and memorie, do make this my last will and testament in manner and forme as herafter followeth: first and before all things I Reccommende my soule defence savegarde and protection of allmightie god the Father the sonne and the holie ghoste three distinct persons yet but one gode in Trinite hoping and assuring my self to be one of the elected and chosen soules whome my lorde and Redeemer Jesus Christe hathe purchased and bought with the most precious and deare bloude of his harte and my hope also to be placed in the holie companye there and be partaker of his eternell glorie. For of him and them I had my soule being and most humble with allmanner thankes I yealde and Render it to them againe according to my bounden dutie.

John Mussared the younger of St Nicholas at Wade (1578), CCAL, PRC 32/34 fol. 26v:

> I comytt and commend my soule unto almyghtie god my maker and creator who is the chiefest good who also hath created both heaven and earth of nothing by his word a lone and therefore it followeth that those which are of one mynd thro Jesus Christ with god (as I hope I am) be also partakers of those goods in god, and as beloved children in Christ and heirs of all the fathers Riches, which are infinite and incomprehensible which treasures ther purchased by Jeus Christ in the heavenly Jerusalem, for me all insencable sinner that do trust in hym are more than the eye hather seene or ear hath herred or hath entred into the harte of man. Whose gates are of precious stones and the ways and streates are of pure gold where I hope among the Number of gods elect to be a perpetuall citizen wheras is the fullness of all felicitye and where I shall see god face to face and kno hym perfectly as he is. Which place I do not think to enheryt by any meryttes or desertts of myne whose soule was altogether as a stayned cloth and knowing my self to be altogether an unprofitable servant not able to think of myself so much as one good thought but by the deathe and bloudshed of Jesus Christ who is the intercessor for us all to god the father and is gon before to prepare the waye for us, whome with a Constant faith god grant that I maye followe.

ENDNOTES

1 Wyatt, G., 'Social Networks and Relationships in Early Modern Thanet *c.*1560-*c.*1620' (M.PHIL. thesis, University of Kent, 2009).

2 Lutton, R., *Lollardy and Orthodox Religion in pre-Reformation England*, Studies in History (Woodbridge, 2006), p. 206.

3 Quested, R.K. I., *The Isle of Thanet Farming Community. An Agrarian History of Easternmost Kent: Outlines from Early Times to 1993*, 2nd edn revised and enlarged, p. 40. Quested includes no bibliography and her references do not always give full details of work cited.

4 Clark, P., *English Provincial Society from the Reformation to the Revolution; Religion, Politics and Society in Kent 1500-1640* (Hassocks, 1977), p. 174.

5 Lutton, *Lollardy and Orthodox Religion*, p. 101.

6 Wyatt, thesis, chapter 4, p. 101; section on non conventional religious opinions.

7 Simpson, P., 'Custom and Conflict: Disputes over Tithe in the Diocese of Canterbury 1501-1600', PH.D. thesis, University of Kent, 1997, p. 217.

8 MacCulloch, D., *Reformation. Europe's House Divided 1490-1700'* (London, 2003), p. xx.

9 Marshall, P., 'The Naming of Protestant England', *Past and Present*, 214 (2012), pp. 87-128.

10 MacCulloch, D, *The Later Reformation in England 1547-1603* (London, 1990), p. 153.

11 *Ibid.*, p. 159.

12 Ryrie, A., *Age of Reformation, the Tudor and Stewart Realms 1485-1603* (Harlow, 2009), p. 284.

13 Martin, J.W., 'English Protestant Separatism at its beginnings: Henry Hart and the Free-Will Men', *Sixteenth Century Journal* 7 (2) (1972), pp. 55-78.

14 Acheson, R.J., *The Development of Religious Separatism in the Diocese of Canterbury 1590-1660* (PH.D. thesis, University of Kent, 1983), p. 12, map 3.

15 *Ibid.*, p. 35.

16 Burrage, C., *The Early English Dissenters in the Light of Recent Research (1550-1641)* (New York, 1912), p. 202. Robert Browne was the best known of the leaders of separatism who emerged in the 1580s and those in authority tended to label all separatists 'Brownists'. For further detail, see MacCulloch, *Later Reformation*, pp. 159-160.

17 MacCulloch, *Later Reformation*, p. 38 *et passim*.

18 John Udall (*c.*1560-1592), a clergyman of 'puritan' views, involved in the publication of the *Martiin Marprelate* tracts; preached against the doctrines and disciplines of the Church of England. He was summoned before the Court of High Commission in 1586 by the bishop of Winchester and the dean of Windsor. He taught that archbishops were not scriptural and was one of many who thought the form of church government was laid down by Christ in the New Testament.

19 Rosman, D., 'From Chapterhouse to Whitefriars: the story of Canterbury's Dissenting Congregations'; lecture given on 8 November 2008 to Canterbury Archaeological Society. Dr Rosman also implied that there were no separatist groups meeting at this period in the Canterbury area.

20 Clark, *English Provincial Society*, p. 174, quoting Collinson, P., *The Elizabethan Puritan Movement* (1967), pp. 388-96; CCAL, Z.3.15 fol. 304.9; CCAL X.11.2 fol. 116-7.

21 CCAL, PROB 11/88, Will of William Norwood, B.D.

22 Clark, *English Provincial Society*, pp. 174, 175; CCAL, Z3/15 William Somner, Precedent Book; CCAL, PRC 17/49 fol. 201v (Will of William Cleybrooke 1592); CCAL, PRC 17/49 fol. 281 (Will of John Allen the elder 1594); CCAL, PRC 17/50 fol. 295v (Will of James Bromwell 1597); CCAL, PRC 32/38 fol. 27 (Will of Jeremy Fanting 1596); CCAL, PRC 21/17 fol. 326 (Inventory of the goods of Edward Smith of Monkton 1610).

23 Withycombe, E. (ed.), *Oxford Dictionary of English Christian Names*, 2nd edn (Oxford, 1949); Redmonds, G., *Christian Names in Local and Family History* (Kew, 2004).

24 Acts18: 2, 18, 26; Romans 16: 3, 2; Timothy 4: 19; 1 Corinthians 16: 19.

25 A member of the Norwood family was called Manasses; the connection between this family and Cleybrooke already noted.

[26] Bible New Testament, Epistle of Paul to the Romans, Chapter 16; Abdias appears mainly in the St Lawrence family of Coppin and their kin.

[27] Tyacke, N., 'Popular Puritan Mentality in Elizabethan England', in *The English Commonwealth 1547-1640*, ed. P. Clark *et al.*, *Essays ... presented to Joel Hurstfield* (Leicester, 1979), pp. 77-233, p. 80.

[28] *Ibid.*, p. 91.

[29] CCAL, PRC 32/31 fol. 340 (Will of George Robinson of Monkton 1570); N. Tyacke, 'Popular Puritan Mentality', pp. 77-233.

[30] See Wyatt thesis, chapter 1.

[31] Cowper, J.M., *Canterbury Marriage Licences 1568-1618*, 1st series (Canterbury, 1892).

[32] H. Knatchbull-Hugessen, *Kentish Family* (London, 1960, Pedigree).

[33] *Ibid.*

[34] CCAL, U3/89/1/1 St Mildred's Canterbury, Register of Christenings, Marriages and Burials 1559-1691; CCAL, PRC 32/39 fol. 226v (Will of Thomas Cranmer 1604); CCAL, PRC 32/44 fol. 126 (Will of Anne Cranmer 1612).

[35] Hussey, A., 'Visitations of the Archdeacon of Canterbury', *Archaeologia Cantiana* 25 (1907), 11-56.

[36] Clark, *English Provincial Society*.

[37] CCAL, XII/1 fol. 167v (Deposition of Richard Smallwood.

[38] CCAL, XII/1 fol. 172 (Deposition of Thomas Mussared).

[39] CCAL, XII/1 fol. 168v (Deposition of John Lyon).

[40] CCAL, XII/1 fol. 168v (Deposition of Edward Whitlocke).

[41] Simpson, 'Custom and Conflict', p. 217.

[42] Maltby, J.D., *Prayer Book and People in Elizabethan and Early Stuart England* (Cambridge, 1998).

[43] Alsop, J.D., 'Religious Preambles in Early Modern English Wills as Formulae', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, vol. 40, no. 1 (1989), pp. 19-27; M. Spufford, 'Religious Preambles and the Scribes of Villagers' Wills in Cambridgeshire, 1570-1700', in *When Death Do Us Part. Interpreting the Probate Records of Early Modern England*, edited by T. Arkell *et al.* (Oxford, 2000), pp. 144-157.

[44] Spufford, 'Religious Preambles', p. 157.

[45] Zell, M., 'The Use of Religious Preambles as a Measure of Religious Belief in the Sixteenth Century', *Bulletin of Institute of Historical Research* 50 (1977), pp. 246-248 ; Clark, P. *English Provincial Society*; A.G. Dickens, *English Reformation* (London, 1964), pp. 191-2.

[46] Cross, C., 'Wills as Evidence of Popular Piety in the Reformation Period: Leeds and Hull, 1540-1640', in *The End of Strife*, ed. D. Loades (Edinburgh, 1984), pp. 44-51 (p. 44 note 2 and p. 51).

[47] *Ibid.*

[48] Collinson, P., *The Religion of Protestants* (Oxford, 1982), p. 197.

[49] CCAL, PRC 17/32 fol. 27 (Will of James Abarrowe of St John's 1557); CCAL, PRC 32/29 fol. 116v (Will of Valentine Everard of St Nicholas 1559); CCAL, PRC 17/40 fol. 243v (Will of Robert Saunder of St Lawrence 1558); CCAL, PRC 17/37 fol. 37v (Will of Richard Sampson of St Peter's 1563); J.D. Alsop, *Religious Preambles*, p. 20.

[50] CCAL, PRC 32/36 fol.1 (Will of Elizabeth Baker of Birchington1586); CCAL, PRC 17/47 fol. 1 (Will of Alexander Norwood, gent. of St John's, 1583); CCAL, PRC 17/34 fol. 174 (Will of Alexander Norwood the elder 1557).

[51] CCAL, PRC 32/37 fol. 54 (Will of Nicholas Ausey als Dawson of St Nicholas 1592); CCAL, PRC 32/36 fol. 332v (Will of Thomas Holland of St Nicholas 1587); CCAL, PRC 32/36 fol. 110v (Will of John Sackett of St Nicholas 1588); CCAL, PRC 32/36 fol. 189v (Will of John Tutton of Monkton 1590); CCAL, PRC 32/40 fol. 167v (Will of Richard Langley of St Nicholas 1607); CCAL, PRC 32/41 fol. 255 (Will of Frances Blechenden of Monkton 1607); CCAL, PRC 32/38 fol. 120v (Will of William Luckett of Birchington 1596).

[52] Marsh, C., 'In the Name of God? Will-making and Faith in Early Modern England', in *The Records of the Nation*, edited by G.H. Martin and P. Spufford (Woodbridge, 1990), pp. 215-249 (p. 218). This part of the preamble is included in the Appendix.

[53] Marsh, 'In the name of God', p. 219.

[54] CCAL, PRC 32/41 fol. 257v (Will of Thomas Best of Monkton 1609); CCAL, PRC 17/42 fol. 104v (Will of John Blowfield of St John's 1574); CCAL, PRC 32/34 fol. 26v (Will of John Mussared the younger of St Nicholas 1578); Revelation Chapter 21 verse 21; the preambles to the wills of John Blowfield and John Mussared appear in the Appendix.

[55] Whiteman, A. and Clapinson, M. (eds), *The Compton Census of 1676: A critical edition*, Records of Social and Economic History, New Series X (Oxford, 1986), pp. 8, 9 and 13 (table 1.3).

[56] Ryrie, *Age of Reformation*, p. 265.

[57] *Ibid.*, p. 255.