Timeline of the Church of England

from the Reformation to the founding of Queen Anne's Bounty

Christianity came to the British Isles with the Romans early in the first millennium AD and 'organised Christianity' can be dated to the arrival of St Augustine in Canterbury in AD597. In the early 16th century the Lutheran Reformation broke out in Central Europe; in England a theological and political argument between the Pope and Henry VIII on power and authority resulted in a break from Rome, creating a Church that was still "one holy, catholic and apostolic" yet with the King at the top. Amongst the legal and financial changes that ensued, taxes on Church livings were no longer paid to the Pope but instead went to the Crown. Two centuries later the money would be used to benefit poor clergy via the auspices of Queen Anne's Bounty.

1509 Accession of Henry VIII, who marries Catherine of Aragon, his brother's widow.

1521 The Pope grants Henry the title "Defender of the Faith" for An Assertion of the Seven Sacraments Against Martin Luther.

1531 The Clergy buy a royal pardon from the charge of Praemunire (swearing allegiance to a power outside the realm, ie. here the pope) for £118,000 and recognise Henry as "protector and only supreme head of the English Church".

1532 The Act of Conditional Restraint of Annates – allows taxes on first fruits and tenths (of benefice's income) to be transferred from the Pope to the King.

1533 Cranmer becomes Archbishop of Canterbury, marries Henry to Anne Boleyn and dissolves his marriage to Catherine. Elizabeth I is born a few months later.

The Act in Restraint of Appeals abolishes legal appeals to Rome.

1534 Act of Supremacy (Henry made 'supreme head in earth of the Church of England'), and Act of the Submission of the Clergy (clergy can no longer make their own laws in contradiction to common law).

1536 Dissolution of the smaller monasteries.
The Ten Articles (statements of the Church of England's doctrine - moderately reformatory).

1539 Dissolution of remaining monasteries.

The Six Articles (revised statements, more conservative).

1547 Henry dies, Edward VI succeeds.

1549 Cranmer's first prayer book (under the conservative protectorate of Somerset, Edward's uncle).

1552 Cranmer's second prayer book (under the radical protectorate of Northumberland).

1553 Accession of Mary I, reinstatement of Roman Catholicism.

1558 Accession of Elizabeth I, return to the Church of England.

1559 The Religious Settlement – the finalising of the establishment of the Church of England. The Book of Common Prayer is reissued.

1571 39 Articles – final moderate statement of the Church's beliefs, still used today.

1603 Accession of James I.

1611 The King James Bible is published (the 'Authorised Version').

1625 Accession of Charles I.

1642-45 English Civil War.

1645 Archbishop Laud of Canterbury executed.

1649 Charles I executed.

1660 Restoration of Charles II.

1662 Final version of the Book of Common Prayer – still in use today.

1685 Accession of James II (a Roman Catholic).

1689 Protestant William III and Mary II replace James.

1702 Accession of Anne.

1704 Letters patent created for 'The Governors of the Bounty of Queen Anne for the Augmentation of the Maintenance of the Poor Clergy'.

The Creation of Queen Anne's Bounty – a short anecdotal history

Portrait of Queen Anne

Like her father and uncle, Anne chose St. George's Day for her coronation in 1702, thus emphasising her Englishness in comparison with her late Dutch brother-in-law and the Pretender in France. Indeed she told her first Parliament that she knew her heart to be:

"Entirely English… My own principles must always keep me entirely firm to the interests and religion of the Church of England, and will incline me to countenance those who have the truest zeal to support it."

Anne had had a rather lonely upbringing – her mother had died when she was 6, her only sibling had gone to Holland when she was 13 and she was separated from her father by their different faiths. But her marriage to her cousin Prince George of Denmark when she was 18 gave her great happiness. Although her uncle Charles is said to have said of him:

"I have tried him drunk and I have tried him sober and there is nothing in him"

they appear to have suited each other well for George supported her through the annual pregnancies that marked each of the first seventeen years of their marriage. Sadly her last surviving child died in 1700 at the age of 11 and she ascended the throne knowing it was likely that she would be the last Stuart monarch.

It is very difficult, over the distance of three hundred years, to look back to 1704 and imagine what the country was like, and what the reaction of contemporaries (and of the clergy in particular) would have been to the foundation of the Bounty. The nation was small, standing at five million people (in comparison with France's twenty-two million), but the capital, in which ten per cent of our population resided, was greater than Paris or any other city in Europe. London had many immigrants – some 50,000 French Protestants fleeing persecution by Louis XIV, many Dutchmen involved in trade or who had come over on the late King's arrival, and there were some 10,000 non-Caucasians. Then, as now, as Daniel Defoe pointed out:

> "A true-born Englishman's a contradiction,
> In speech an irony, in fact a fiction."

The average life expectancy was 37 years. However the result of greater longevity and immigration was a dearth of accommodation in the capital; already it had reached out to Hyde Park Corner and Marylebone. Since there was only one bridge over the river, expansion south was hampered. Beyond these bounds were fields - the gardens behind the houses of the Dukes of Montagu and of Bedford in Great Russell Street enjoyed views up to Highgate and Hampstead for example. The roads leading from the City were unlit and dangerous at night, especially that leading from Oxford Road to the Tottenham Court.

The populace took its pleasure in coffee-houses, perhaps reading the Daily Courant, the first daily newspaper in Europe. The theatre and opera were now fashionable and the clergy pursued lives barely different from their neighbours in most ways. Although pastoral letters were sent out recommending clergy:

> "not to tipple and frequent Alehouses"

a Swiss traveller observed:

"A foreigner is surprised to find the clergy in public places, in taverns and eating-houses, where they smoke and drink just like laymen; but as they scandalise no one, you quickly get accustomed to this…"

Drinking did not only take place in alehouses. The Reverend Samuel May, curate of Roborough, Devon, for example, was troubled by rowdy parishioners coming into his church – on one occasion two drunks staged a boxing match in the aisle whilst he was preaching, and on another, a man was so inebriated that he rolled onto the floor and his wig came off.

THE
SICK MAN
VISITED:
AND

Sick man visited

The Church was integral to the structures of society and the country. As the legally established national Church it had the Queen at its head and all its bishops sat in the House of Lords. The structural organisation of dioceses, archdeaconries and parishes covered the whole country and the clergy were central figures in the community. Parish clergy, in part due to their educated status, were both spiritual and community leaders and much local administration, including road repair and assistance for the poor, operated through the vestry. This is why we still often have parish councils, though they are no longer the same as parochial church councils. Over 90% of the population were officially members of the

Church and the most important moments in people's lives – baptism, marriage and burial – were marked by it. Legally all were supposed to attend church on Sunday and observe it as a day of rest.

Educated and influential laymen were also playing an increasingly active part in the Christian life of the nation. The Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge was set up in 1698 to bring children

> "to Letters and Religion, to Sense and good manners; who otherwise would have been brought up in Idleness and Vice"

and there were various societies for the Reformation of Manners. This was the social climate in which Queen Anne's Bounty was founded and bore fruit.

Widespread clerical poverty hindered the effective maintenance of the established Church. Most clergy were graduates and undertook a life of toil with only modest reward. Anecdotal and factual evidence reflect the extent of the problem:

> "There are a vast many poor Wretches, whose Benefices do not bring them in enough to buy them Cloaths. This obliges 'em to look for other Ways, and those often sordid ones, to get their Bread; and thus the Ministry grows scandalous."

When Queen Anne's Bounty was set up an income survey of the 11,000 livings showed there were:

Livings under £10	471
Livings under £20	1,216
Livings under £30	2,122
Livings under £40	3,043
Livings under £50	3,826
Livings under £60	4,446
Livings under £70	4,871
Livings under £80	5,082
Total	5,082

One consequence was that many livings were held in plurality, so that the incomes could be added. Pluralist incumbents often employed curates to help them, but they had no security and could be turned out at a week's notice. This simply exacerbated levels of clergy poverty. The Archbishop told the Queen that:

> "Such curates, having no fixed place of abode, and but a poor and precarious maintenance, are powerfully tempted to a kind of vagrant and dishonourable life, wandering for better subsistence from parish to parish."

Some became schoolmasters on a lowly wage and others served as chaplains in the homes of the gentry, where they were often treated very badly, being ordered not only to tutor the children, but to act as grooms or superior servants on a stipend of not more than £10 a year. A Revd. Richard Steele complained:

> "I am a Chaplain to an honourable family, very regular at hours of devotion, and I hope of an unblameable life; but for not offering to rise at the second course, I found my patron and his lady very sullen and out of humour; though at first I did not know the reason of it. At length when I happened to help myself to a jelly, the lady of the house, otherwise a devout woman, told me: 'It did not become a man of my cloth to delight in such frivolous food'. But as I continued to sit out the last course, I was yesterday informed that 'his lordship had no further occasion for my service.' "

Parishes however absorbed the majority of the newly ordained, especially after the passing of the Curates Act. This insisted that the growing number of pluralist and non-resident incumbents provide a curate to serve in their place, for which they were supposed to be paid at least £20 per annum. At this level bricklayers or carpenters, who earned two shillings a day, or a footman on £7 per annum plus board and lodgings, were better off than the curate.

A common way for the clergy to improve their lot was to marry well. Squire Payne was the son of one of King William's chaplains. He went to Magdalene College, as his father had, and was appointed Vicar of Fulbourn in 1699 by its patron, the Bishop of Peterborough, which he

served from Cambridge whilst still retaining his College Fellowship there. Seven years later he married the bishop's daughter and was promoted to the valuable Rectory of Barnack, which was also in the bishop's gift. His wife's brother was Archdeacon of Northampton, and his brother-in-law Chancellor, and later Dean, of the diocese, and between them they ruled the diocese during the bishop's declining years. He had not gained preferment to the prebendal stall in the cathedral by the time the aged bishop died but rather he had to wait until his brother-in-law the Dean, having secured the Chancellorship for his son, became Bishop of Lincoln five years later, to gain both a stall and an archdeaconry in that diocese.

Preferment race

Thus attaining preferment was often political and nepotistic, as can often be seen in the cases of non-residency – Thomas Barlow, Bishop of Lincoln from 1675 to 1691, visited his cathedral just once, whilst Bishop Hoadly of Bangor never visited his diocese at all!

Yet it was not solely in the Church's power to rectify the situation since it controlled only about a quarter of appointments. More than half were held by private individuals, a tenth by the Crown and the rest by the universities.

Portrait of Bishop Gilbert Burnet dated 1789

A scheme to rectify these financial concerns was devised by Bishop Burnet of Salisbury. On studying the Reformation he realised that if the Crown could be persuaded to restore the First Fruits and Tenths that had been appropriated by Henry VIII as state income, it could provide a fund to supplement clerical incomes. At first he approached his friend Queen Mary who gave her support but she had died before it could be acted on. He then talked to King William and Princess Anne, who also favoured the plan. For some years the politics of Whigs and Tories contrived to obstruct it, but Archbishop Sharp of York, who stood on the other side of the political spectrum from Burnet, also advocated the plan, so reassured of its wisdom Queen Anne, (as she was by then), assented.

In 1703 Anne agreed to write off the debts of those benefices worth less than £30 per annum that had not paid their tenths and the Treasurer informed Archbishop Sharp that she was willing to support the proposed Bounty.

The scheme was announced in the Commons on February 7th, the day after the Queen's thirty-ninth birthday. Addresses of thanks flowed in from the clergy for:

> "An act unequalled by any prince…since the Reformation, and which…may atone for acts of a very different kind done in some of their reigns."

Queen Anne's Bounty Charter

The Bounty's charter of November 3rd consisted of a preamble which confirmed the ill effects poverty could have on clergy:

> "Divers mean and stipendiary preachers…depending for their necessary maintenance upon the good will and liking of their hearers, have been… under temptation of too much complying and suiting their doctrines and teaching to the humours rather than the good of their hearers…"

The Governors were an impressive list of almost all the Establishment, headed by Prince George and the Archbishops. There were two classes of Governor: a number of Peers and Officers of State (for the duration of their lives) and further episcopal and other members by virtue of their offices. These ex-officio posts were:

Archbishops and bishops,
the Speaker of the House of Commons,
the Master of the Rolls,
the Privy Councillors,
the Lieutenants of the English and Welsh Counties,
the Deans of Cathedral Churches,
the Judges of the Courts of Queen's Bench and Common Pleas,
the Barons of the Court of the Exchequer,
the Serjeants-at-law,
the Attorney and Solicitor General,
the Advocate General,
the Chancellors and Vice-Chancellors of Oxford and
Cambridge Universities,
the Mayor and Aldermen of the City of London,
the Mayors of York and English Cities,
the Officers of the Board of Green Cloth,
the Queen's Counsel, and
the Clerks in Ordinary of the Privy Council.

In total there were about 200, which rose to some 650 by 1901!
A quorum of seven, including a Privy Councillor, a lawyer and a bishop was chosen (though in practice it was found that even this was difficult to achieve and many meetings were cancelled as a result). The quorum of Governors was to meet at least quarterly in the Prince's Chamber adjoining the House of Lords. The Archbishop insisted that the Exchequer should not have the administration of the Bounty, but rather that the Church should continue to maintain its own financial affairs with its own officers though these later became Crown appointments in 1713. The first Secretary was John Chamberlain and Edward Tennison (the Archbishop's cousin) was Treasurer (the offices were to be combined in 1831).

The income from the First Fruits and Tenths granted to the Bounty was some £17,000 per annum (equivalent to some £2,000,000 in 2004). Unfortunately thirteen pensions of £10,950 per annum had been granted out of this and the first task of the Governors was to redeem them. Of the eight granted by Charles II one was to his mistress the Duchess of Portsmouth, who sold it to Lord Waldegrave, the husband of James II's illegitimate daughter; another was to the Countess of Plymouth, widow of one of Charles's illegitimate sons; and three smaller ones were to Catholics who had helped Charles escape after the Battle of Worcester. William III had granted four, one to another of Charles's sons, the Duke of St. Albans, a distinguished soldier. However, these pensions were not that generous, since most were seriously in arrears – to the tune of more than a whole year's income – and these had to be settled before redemptions could start. However, many of the recipients were happy to settle all their claims for the certainty of money up front.

The main reason for the large arrears was the reluctance of the clergy to pay their First Fruits and Tenths. Bishops were not always good examples to their clergy in this respect – the Bishop of Winchester owed some £3,000, some of it from Bath & Wells which he left twenty years before. Bishop Beaw, who had been a soldier in the armies of Charles I and the Tsar, was made Bishop of Llandaff in 1679. This poor see was the bottom of the promotion ladder, with an income of only £300 per annum (the richest, Winchester, Durham and Canterbury, brought in some £5-7,000). In 1704 he asked for remission of all his arrears, pleading his loyal service, his great age, the poverty of the bishopric and

his many children but was told by the Attorney-General that now the revenue was vested in the Bounty the arrears could not be written off. Many other bishops were in the same situation. It was hoped that since the clergy knew that the monies they paid would now assist their poorer brethren, rather than the aristocracy, they would feel conscience-bound to pay more promptly.

First site of Bounty offices

The Crown granted the Bounty offices next to the Banqueting House in Whitehall and questionnaires were sent to the dioceses asking them to value their poor benefices. These returns were at the heart of the assistance given to the poor clergy – the very poorest were to be tackled first, and any private benefactions met with a matching grant. All this was discussed at the first Governors' meeting held on the morning of Thursday, December 12th to which the Archbishop brought a design for the Seal. It took many years before the Bounty's income was free of encumbrances, but for the first time the Church of England had taken steps towards relieving clergy poverty.

What happened next

The Bounty's first aim was to augment the very poorest benefices. It began with those whose income was below £10 per annum. As well as converting the tax revenue into augmentation grants, from the outset the Bounty also urged private donors to give money. It offered matching grants and allowed a higher eligibility threshold to encourage them to do so. Initially benefices with £35 per annum or less could receive grants if a private donation were also available. In time both thresholds rose.

The monies paid out were given as capital for the living to invest in land, thus augmenting the living's income. Grants were made to a capital value of £200 a piece – a level that long remained fixed. But from 1838 it was possible to make as many as three such grants to any one eligible living in one year. The Governors retained the deeds. This land became known as 'Bounty Land'. When land was not or could not be bought immediately investments were made.

Initially such investments included Old South Sea Annuities and Exchequer Bills. These were held in trust for the livings and by 1718 it was agreed the interest on them would go to the relevant living in

the mean time. The rate, though, was deliberately low to encourage the living to make the land purchase quickly. It had fallen from 4% to 2% by 1758 but the interest on the investments was greater so the 'profit' generated paid the Governors' expenses, and any excess over this in turn went back into the general fund.

Between 1809 and 1820 £100,000 in public money was given each year as the 'Parliamentary Grants Fund', which served to encourage giving from private individuals. As the monies rose and the fund grew the maximum income of livings eligible for grants from the Bounty increased likewise. That level had risen to £120 by 1810 and £200 by 1820. By 1815 some 3,306 livings had been augmented and the aggregate in funds paid out for the purpose stood at some £1,440,000, plus a further £465,000 in private donations.

Over time Queen Anne's Bounty also gained responsibility for providing and repairing the parsonages of poor livings, and later managed the tithe receipts payable to clergy. By the 1920s tithe made up most of the Bounty's work. The first fruits and tenths taxes, whose restoration to the Church and redistribution to support the poorest clergy played so significant a part in the Church's better arrangement of its affairs, were abolished in 1926.

Meanwhile more bodies were being created to deal with issues of poverty, organisation and management of the Church. In 1818 the Church Building Commissioners were set up by Parliament to create new parishes and provide new churches in areas which had seen rapid population growth during the Industrial Revolution. Another body, the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, was set up in 1836 to reorganize dioceses, abolish surplus posts in cathedrals and take over the responsibility for funding bishops and some cathedral costs, together with the assets that had supported those responsibilities. Any surplus income was to be used:

> "for the cure of souls in parishes where such assistance is most required".

They augmented the living of incomes as did the Bounty. But unlike the Bounty they treated population as an important factor. The bigger the area in which the priest ministered, the better the case for benefice augmentation. So perhaps as much by accident as design, the two bodies'

work was complementary. The Bounty focused on poor rural areas whilst the Ecclesiastical Commissioners looked to the newly-growing urban ones. In 1856 the Commissioners took over the work of the Church Building Commissioners and from 1907 they became involved with clergy pensions.

Great Smith Street, home of Queen Anne's Bounty from 1734 (photograph dated 1898)

Queen Anne's Bounty settled into a permanent home on the west side of Dean's Yard in 1734 and remained there for the next two centuries. In 1948, after several decades of planning the two bodies merged and the Church Commissioners inherited the assets and work of both Queen Anne's Bounty and the Ecclesiastical Commissioners. The Bounty staff moved into 1 Millbank, which had been designed to house the combined staff. From 1999 they have worked with the newly created Archbishops' Council as part of the National Church Institutions. Today in 2004 the Church Commissioners funds stand at just under £4 billion and they still assist the Church of England's work nationwide just as Queen Anne had intended 300 years ago.