



# Library Newsletter

Living Faith - Living Community - Living History

Spring 2013

## Dear Friends of Carlisle Cathedral

Canon David Weston and I thought you might appreciate being kept informed about the work we are carrying out on the Cathedral's historic library collection, particularly in view of your generous offer to part-fund the work this year. We aim to produce four newsletters this year which we hope you will find interesting. Future editions will appear on the Friends' website rather than being posted out. The Cathedral's library collection is fascinating both in terms of the books themselves and also the history of how the collection came into being. Working on the library over the last 12 months has certainly been an education to me, opening up a whole new field of knowledge. *Clare Daniel – Historic Collection Cataloguer*

### Donations

The following books have recently been donated to Carlisle Cathedral Library in memory of **Andrew James Blackett-Ord CVO:**

- **Burnet, Gilbert.** *The history of the rights of princes in the disposing of ecclesiastical benefices and church-lands.* London : printed by J.D. for Richard Chiswell, 1682.
- *Liturgia, seu liber precum communium in Ecclesia Anglicana receptus* [Book of Common Prayer in Latin]. London : Churchill, 1706.
- **Tullie, Thomas.** *Præcipuorum theologiæ capitum enchiridion didacticum: cum appendicula practica de coena Domini.* Oxford : typis Lichfield, 1716.
- **Ridley, Gloucester.** *Eight sermons on the Divinity and operations of the Holy Ghost... preached 1740, 1741, etc.* Oxford : Clarendon, 1802.
- **Watts, Isaac.** *A short view of the whole scripture history* (22<sup>nd</sup> edition). London : printed for Rivington et al, 1811.
- **Hawker, Robert DD.** *The poor man's concordance and dictionary.* London : Ebenezer Palmer, 1812.
- *The new whole duty of man.* London : W. Bent, 1813.
- **Locke, John.** *An essay concerning human understanding* (24<sup>th</sup> edition). London : Rivington, 1824.
- **Paley, William.** Complete Works [in 4 volumes]. London : printed by J.F. Dove for George Cowie and Co. et al, 1825.
- **Townsend, George.** *The New Testament: arranged in chronological and historical order with copious notes on the principal subjects in theology* [2 volumes]. London : Rivington, 1825.

### Thomas Smith and the Plague

Hiding under the innocuous title of "*Tracts XXII*" is an intriguing collection of 17<sup>th</sup> century pamphlets, broadsheets and correspondence relating to the plague bound into a single volume. The book originally belonged to Thomas Smith, former Bishop of Carlisle and one of the original benefactors of the Cathedral's Library. The volume comprises seven pamphlets, five broadsheets and three handwritten letters. Their publication dates range from 1625 to 1686 but are mostly concerned with the 1665-66 outbreak of plague. The material has been the subject of two recent research enquiries, from the University of York and Canterbury Christ Church University.

The first booklet "*Certain necessary Directions...*" contains medical advice from the College of Physicians, acts to provide relief for the poor and public orders to prevent the spread of infection. It requires, for example, that "*disorderly tipling in Taverns Ale house and Cellars, be severely looked unto, as the ... greatest occasion of dispersing the Plague...*".

The second book is the tract "*Vox Civitatis*" (1625) by Benjamin Spenser. This is an important work which is often cited in plague research as it reflects contemporary attitudes and beliefs towards the Plague where illness was seen as the necessary punishment for sin. Spenser criticizes the wealthy Londoners who fled London leaving the poor behind to suffer and starve; he advises them to return to their homes but not to their sins.

There are also two medical texts: "*Morbus Epidemius Anni 1643*" and "*A Brief Treatise of the Nature, Causes, Signes, Preservation From, And Cure of the Pestilence*" (1665) that describe symptoms together with what were believed to be the causes and cures of the plague.

The final two booklets "*Natural and Political Observations ... made upon the Bills of Mortality*" (1662) and

"Reflections on the Weekly Bills of Mortality for the Cities of London and Westminster" (1665) analyse trends in the bills of mortality. Bills of mortality were broadsheets, that is, single sheet publications, containing mortality figures that the London boroughs were required to produce from the late sixteenth century, with particular reference to plague deaths. They originally also included burials and baptisms.

Some of the broadsheets that have been bound into Thomas Smith's volume are very rare. Three are unique to Carlisle Cathedral: "King James his Proclamation and Order against all such as held a man should not flye from the Plague" (1686), "The Choicest and Approved Antidotes against the Plague" (1665) and "Having received from an excellent Person a Receipt of a Sovereign Water for the Plague" (1665).

A fourth broadsheet "Londons Lord Have Mercy Upon Us" (1665) is also very rare – the only other recorded copies being at the British Library, the Guildhall Library and the Bodleian Library." The title *Lord Have Mercy* reflected what was painted on the doors of plague infected households. They contained mortality figures taken from the bills of mortality, accounts of biblical and historical plagues, medical advice and verses on the need for repentance. They were also often illustrated with lurid scenes of death. Seven *Lord Have Mercy* broadsheets were published during the 1665-66 plague epidemic. The first plague broadsheet was printed in 1625 for John Trundle, of which eight copies



have survived. At least five different editions were produced during the 1636-37 outbreak. According to Dr Mark Jenner, lecturer at the University of York, in his article "Plague on a Page", the only documented owner and reader of a 17<sup>th</sup> century plague broadsheet was in fact Thomas Smith. Smith appears to have taken quite an interest, even filling in mortality figures himself where they were missing.

The final items included in Thomas Smith's plague volume are three handwritten letters sent to him in July 1665 from a group of Durham dignitaries, including the Mayor of Durham, John Stokeld. The letters include orders to prevent the spread of the plague within the region. Thomas Smith was a Canon at Durham Cathedral at the time.

What I personally find most fascinating about the plague volume is not so much that some of its contents are so rare but rather that when reading it, I feel I am experiencing momentous events through the eyes of someone who lived through them, Thomas Smith.

If anyone would like to read Dr Jenner's article "Plague on a Page" please contact the Cathedral Office or email the Library. The other researcher to show an interest in the Cathedral's plague material was an MA student from Canterbury Christ Church University, Jaqueline Crayford. Again, the Library has a copy of her finished thesis "Plague and Print Culture: seventeenth Century attitudes towards the origins and cures of plague" if anyone wishes to consult it.

Carlisle Cathedral  
7 The Abbey  
Carlisle  
CA3 8TZ  
01228 548151  
Library@carlislecathedral.org.uk

**The Library Catalogue**  
If you want to check whether the Cathedral has a specific book, please go to the Library's web-page (below). The majority of the Cathedral's Library holdings published before 1801 are now catalogued onto either the **ESTC** (*English Short Title Catalogue*) or the **CLC** (*Cathedral Library Catalogue*). For works published after 1800 please contact the Library.

[www.carlislecathedral.org.uk/cathedral\\_library](http://www.carlislecathedral.org.uk/cathedral_library)