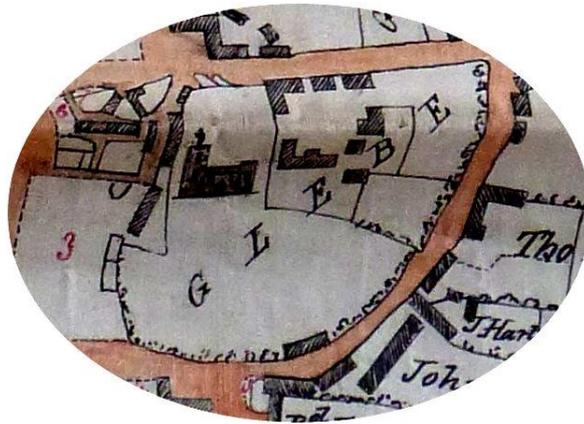


# BARBY'S EARLY RECTORY



BARBY LOCAL  
HISTORY GROUP  
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## BARBY'S EARLY RECTORY<sup>i</sup>

We are fortunate to have three paintings of this early Rectory which give a good idea of its appearance and some changes made to it over the years before it was pulled down in the mid nineteenth century. These pictures have only recently come to our notice. An undated pair show the front (north) and rear (south) views of the Rectory, and the third the south at an earlier point in its history (in 1700 according to a note on the back). The last has been deposited in Northamptonshire Record Office (NRO); the other two are in the present Rectory<sup>ii</sup>.

The earlier painting (below) shows the south front before a new wing was built in place of the rather ramshackle affair depicted. Its colouring suggests it could have been of brick (a high class building material at this period), but it may have been of red sandstone like the church tower. The building on the right is certainly painted with a definite suggestion of stone on the gable end.



*The old Rectory from the south c 1700*

This early Rectory may well have been built or extended by the Isham family. They were sold the advowson (the right to appoint the Rector) together with the Lordship of the Manor in the 1610s by the heirs of Lord Zouche, whose ancestors, according to Baker's *History of Northamptonshire* (published 1830), had held the Manor since the 1200s. Baker says "*Parliamentary Commissioners in 1655 certified it to be a parsonage worth £162 pa in the gift of Lady Montague, Mr Thorp incumbent*"<sup>iii</sup>. Lady Montague was formerly Ann Isham, daughter of Gregory Isham of Braunston.

Thomas Isham was Rector of Barby from 1662, replacing Richard Thorp, a Puritan who refused to subscribe to the Act of Uniformity. Thomas's father Zaccheus (died Barby 1651) was the brother of Gregory Isham who was then Lord of the Manor of Barby. Gregory left the manor and advowson to Ann, later Lady Montague. In the

Hearth Tax of 1674<sup>iv</sup> “Mr Isham” is listed with six hearths, far the largest number in the village, although in the earlier listing of 1662 he had seven. Most other people had only one or two hearths. Thomas died in 1676 at the age of 59; his will proved at Northampton mentioned only two sons and his wife.<sup>v</sup>

In 1677 Thomas Isham was succeeded as Rector by the Reverend Knightley Holled, whose father Jonathan of Cottingham had bought the advowson from the Ishams in 1671. Holled’s surviving inventory taken in October 1700 (to be found at NRO) gives us much detail of the rooms and furnishings. The number of fireplaces seems not to have increased since Isham’s time as there is mention of only six sets of fireirons. These were in the Kitchen, the Little Parlour and the Chamber above it, the Great Parlour and the Chamber above it, and the Brown Chamber. There was also a furnace in the brewhouse. Other rooms listed are the Hall, the Mill Chamber and a Chamber next to it, the Hall Chamber, the Kitchen Chamber, Cellar Chamber, Cellar, Buttery and Garret, and the Study of Books which may just have meant the books themselves (these were valued at £30). Outside, as well as the brewhouse were the Dairy, Stable with Barn over, four other barns including the Tithe Barn, a woodhouse and coalhouse. The whole of the live and dead stock, goods and chattels was valued at £314 19s.

There was a considerable amount of furniture when compared with surviving inventories of Barby yeomen. As well as the books and fireirons, Mr Holled had a clock, two pictures, three glasses (mirrors), a screen, curtains and rods in three bedrooms, glasses and plate. There were ten chairs and three tables in the Little Parlour, two tables and twelve cane chairs in the Great Parlour, a further six cane chairs in the Great Parlour Chamber, a chest of drawers, a close stool and sundry other chairs, stools, presses (cupboards), chests and boxes as well as nine beds and bedding in various chambers.

Knightley Holled was followed in 1701 after a few months’ gap by his son, also named Knightley, and his son, a third Knightley, followed him 1756-1797. This service by the Holleds of 120 years in one parish is the second longest recorded in Northamptonshire by one family.

The two small wings at each end of the Rectory’s front elevation and another on the back shown in the pair of later paintings were probably added during the tenure of the second Knightley Holled, but before the Window Tax Assessment of 1752<sup>vi</sup> when Mr Holled was taxed for 28 windows, the largest number in the village - 26 can be counted in the paintings. It is possible that the seemingly brick building of 1700 was fronted in stone and the windows altered at the same time. A dovecote is shown built into the rear wall at what was probably the service end as the windows are much smaller.



*Barby Rectory south elevation c 1750*

*The shaped trees on the left flanked the door through the wall to the Churchyard; they or their descendants are still there in the garden of one of the houses of the present Rectory Close, built on the site in the 1960s. Part of one can also be seen in the earlier painting*



*The Rectory from the front (north elevation) c 1750*

On 24 Feb 1787 the Rectory and Advowson, glebe lands and tithes said to be worth £439 pa were advertised for sale under decree of Court of Chancery Joseph Butler clerk v Knightley Holled DD, and bought for £4700 by William Gillbee, a wealthy member of the Fishmongers' Company of London.<sup>vii</sup> He left it in 1791 to his son

Earle Gillbee who became the next Rector of Barby from 1797 until his death in 1813.

Gillbee was followed by Charles Williams in 1815; it was he who was said by Baker in 1830 to have much improved the Rectory, suggesting it may have been in some disrepair, or maybe just old fashioned, when he took over. Williams was followed in 1850 by Earle's son Charles Gillbee who died in 1867. He was succeeded by Laurence Jackson who decided to have the old Rectory pulled down as it was so old fashioned and inconvenient. Plans of the new Victorian brick Rectory among the parish records at Northamptonshire Record Office show the footprint of the old Rectory in the garden. The replacement however lasted less than a century as it in turn was demolished in the 1960s to make way for housing. The 1961 rectory was sold to a private buyer in 2019 and a house purchased in Kilsby for the incumbent of the joint benefice of Barby and Kilsby, thus ending many centuries of a dwelling in Barby for the parish priest.

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<sup>i</sup> An earlier version of this article first appeared in the 2013 issue of *Hindsight*, the journal of Northamptonshire Association for Local History.

<sup>ii</sup> Reproduced by kind permission of Rev Peter Beresford, Rector of Barby 1997-2014

<sup>iii</sup> Lambeth MSS Vol 20 fo 34

<sup>iv</sup> The National Archives, E179/254/14 (copy at NRO)

<sup>v</sup> NRO, Northampton wills 3<sup>rd</sup> series D92 Film MW47

<sup>vi</sup> NRO, D 6330

<sup>vii</sup> London Gazette

The map on the cover of this article is taken from the Enclosure Map of 1788. (NRO, Map 5082)